Manila remains in jail. » PAGE 2

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Hafa Adai!

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CUC's request for TRO denied

» Judge orders expedited hearing whether CW-1 workers allowed to continue work

» CUC counsel says USCIS tells court all CW-1 petitions, regardless of filing date, will be processed by Jan. 16

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Manglona

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona has denied the request of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. and 18 of its affected foreign workers for a temporary restraining order that would allow these CW-1 workers to immediately return to work.

After hearing all arguments at the hearing that began at 3:45pm and adjourned at 7:10pm Tuesday, Manglona stated her ruling and denied CUC and the 18 foreign workers' request for a TRO.

According to the hearing's minutes, Manglona, however, stated that plaintiffs CUC and the 18 foreign workers may still pursue their claim for a permanent injunction.

Manglona expressed willingness to set a hearing on an expedited basis and allow for full briefing by the parties.

Manglona set the hearing for plaintiffs' motion for preliminary injunction for Jan. 21, 2016, at 9am.

Plaintiffs CUC and the 18 foreign workers are ordered to file their opening brief by Jan. 11, 2016.

Defendants Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Charles Johnson, Immigration and Customs Enforcement Director Saarah Saldana, and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration

See CUC on Page 4

RELATED NEWS

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➤ Labor: CW permit delays have substantial impact to CNMI PAGE 3

I Love Saipan Pop-Up Store closing down

By DAISY DEMAPAN
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REPORTER

One of the island's newest ventures is closing down indefinitely due to the delay in the processing of permits for its critical Commonwealth-only workers.

According to AC Pacific LLC president Alex Youn, the I Love Saipan Pop Up Store, which is located in the former LA Tax Free Shop building in Chalan Laulau, has shut its doors indefinitely, an additional blow to the economy after Truong's indefinite closure.

The store opened last year following recovery efforts of Typhoon

See STORE on Page 4

DAISY DEMAPAN

The I Love Saipan Pop-Up Store in Chalan Laulau has shut its doors indefinitely as the company awaits the renewals of 27 critical employees. The company's president Alex Youn states that if the issue is prolonged, the island's newest venture will be out of business. Inset shows the company's notice of closure.

More than dozen dignitaries confirmed for Inos' funeral

By DENNIS B. CHAN
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REPORTER

Guam Gov. Eddie Calvo, federal officials, lawmakers, a three star general, and other leaders from off-island have been confirmed to attend the late governor Eloy

Inos

S. Inos' funeral on Tuesday, Jan. 12.

More than a dozen dignitaries will be arriving from off-island next week to attend Inos' funeral, according to a list provided by Office of the Governor press secretary Ivan Blanco yesterday.

Aside from Calvo and staff, other dignitaries set to arrive include Office of Insular Affairs Assistant Secretary Esther Kia'aina, Federated States of Micronesia Vice President Yosiwo George and executive staff, Republic of Palau Vice President Antonio Bells

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Tears streaking his cheeks, President Barack Obama launched a final-year push to tighten sales of firearms in the U.S.

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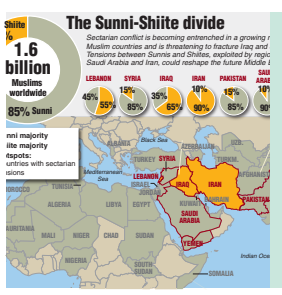

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While many Iraqi Shiites took to the streets in outrage over Saudi Arabia's execution of a prominent Shiite cleric, the Iraq's prime minister has had to walk a more cautious line.

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LIFE & STYLE
Shailene Woodley and Alexander Skarsgard are part of a new HBO project, "Big Little Lies."

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Local

Torres decides against commutation for Manila

By DENNIS B. CHAN
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REPORTER

Reynaldo Manila, a Department of Corrections inmate serving a 60-year sentence from 2002 for the death of his 6-month-old daughter, will remain jailed.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres decided against commutation yesterday after taking into account information received from the CNMI Attorney General's Office and the Department of Public Safety on the criminal history of Manila, a Filipino national.

The CNMI Board of Parole unanimously voted last month to commute Manila's sentence to allow Manila to seek medical treatment in the Philippines for an eye issue said to lead to blindness.

"It is now my decision to not commute the jail sentences of Mr. Manila," Torres wrote in a letter to parole board chair Ramon B. Camacho. "Due to Mr. Manila's medical conditions, I will work with the Office of the Attorney General to make the necessary arrangements to see that Mr. Manila is able to receive the necessary treatment off-island."

In making the decision, administrational officials had spoken to the AG's office and the U.S. attorney general chief prosecutor out of Guam. They also met with members of the family of the victim. The Torres administration will be working with the Department of Justice and the AG to figure out a process in which Manila can receive treatment that CNMI will be bearing as required by the CNMI Constitution, officials said yesterday.

Medical costs that the CNMI would have to bear to treat Manila as a Department of Corrections inmate, a thorough review of his criminal case, and the urgency for him to receive treatment, and alternatives to commutation were some of the issues being mulled ahead of a decision.

The Office of the Attorney General had made it clear that they did not believe that Manila's health concerns warrant commuting a lengthy sentence—with 45 years left to serve—for the serious crime. The OAG had warned that commuting Manila's sentence runs the risk of setting a dangerous precedent with no clear limitations for future cases.

On Dec. 22, the CNMI Board of Parole unanimously voted to support commuting Manila's 60-year prison sentence. Manila is 54 years old and has served 15 years so far. He is five years away from being eligible for parole.

'NMDs need $2.48 for destroyed, damaged homes'

By DENNIS B. CHAN
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REPORTER

Typhoon recovery advocates have determined an unmet need of $2.48 million to rebuild and repair the homes of Northern Marianas descent affected by Typhoon Soudelor. These affected residents belong to some of the most vulnerable groups in the community, according to the Commonwealth Advocates for Recovery Efforts.

The group wrote to the Marianas Public Land Trust on Tuesday for an allocation of up to $3 million to support this repair and rebuilding effort.

Five months after Soudelor, CARE case managers have identified 400 out of 787 cases, or 51 percent, in need of "immediate" housing, repair, or rebuilding assistance. Based on their construction estimates completed to date, the anticipated cost— for 312 home repairs and 88 complete rebuilds—is $10,258,481.92.

CARE's letter comes in support of a standing request from then acting governor Ralph DLG Torres last October for funds generated from the rental and leasing of Northern Marianas land, to help with this rebuilding effort.

"What CARE needs is the funding to address these unmet needs," said CARE president Alex Sablan said in his letter to MPLT board. "Without these resources, those with unmet needs have nowhere else to turn."

CARE case management data suggests 33.9 percent of individuals and families with housing needs are NMDs, Sablan said. The anticipated repair and rebuilding costs for these homes is $3,4777,625.37. Minus the $6,885 in federal disaster aid these households received—a total of $933,606—this leaves a remaining unmet need of $2,484,019.37.

"I know this is not a typical request to MPLT," Sablan said. "Yet the size of the unmet need for those among us who are most vulnerable requires action from all facets of our community."

CARE has found that most of the residents with unmet needs are also those most vulnerable in the community—including the elderly, those with children under the age of 3, as well as those with functional access and immediate medical needs. Eighty-four percent of the 400 families identified fall within on of these highly vulnerable groups, or have an income below 125 percent of the federal poverty guidelines, Sablan said. And 10 percent of the families include at least one household member with a disability.

"CARE is dedicated to building a more resilient community in which structurally safe, sanitary, and functional housing must become the new normal," Sablan said. "We must not allow substandard housing to go unaddressed at this time as we have an unique window of opportunity to rebuild to standards that will withstand future natural disasters."

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Labor: CW permit delays have substantial impact on CNMI

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
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REPORTER

The delays in the processing of Commonwealth-only work permits for foreign workers have a substantial impact to the CNMI, according to the Commonwealth's Department of Labor.

Labor Secretary Edith DeLeon Guerrero said the recent situation of workers being unable to work and businesses closing down is absolutely a concern.

"We just really don't know what the actual number that was really affected was," DeLeon Guerrero said, but several businesses having to close their doors would have a ripple effect.

"When these things happen it does affect also the revenue collection of the Commonwealth. The ripple effect of not just not having the workers in place but also the sales of the company, that trickles down to the collection of taxes for the state so there is a lot of effect happening as a result of this," DeLeon Guerrero said

The labor secretary said their department is coordinating with the U.S Citizenship and Immigration Services in addressing the delays.

DeLeon Guerrero said she spoke with USCIS District 26 director David G. Gulick to discuss some concerns.

"They are working vigorously to get those petitions out and get the visas out too," DeLeon Guerrero said, "Hopefully by this week or next week we're going to get better results."

Employers are reminded to process their permits in a "timely manner."

"I know that USCIS always encourages employers to process timely their petitions. Again, it's good to put it in earlier rather than later too close to the expiration dates," DeLeon Guerrero said.

She added that although USCIS does not specifically state a certain number of days, it would be better to submit permit applications early, even before the recommended 90 days prior to the expiration.

"As an employer, you would take that upon yourself to consider what is timely," DeLeon Guerrero said, "It is best to put it in earlier than the expiration date."

For their department, DeLeon Guerrero assured that there are no delays in the processing of requirements for employers to be able to file their permit applications.

"My policy in the department is that we have to be very responsive," DeLeon Guerrero said, "We treat everybody the same."

"We're all working together. We all have to work collaboratively in partnership with the office of USCIS. We're all working together. We all have to work collaboratively in partnership with the office of USCIS," she added.

DeLeon Guerrero also reiterated that applicants can check their case status online and see if their case has been adjudicated. If so, then they can print it out and workers may be able to report for work again.

Remaining power plant workers 'just have to take on more responsibilities'

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
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REPORTERS

With their request for a temporary restraining order that would allow their foreign workers whose permits expired to immediately return to work being denied by the U.S. District Court, the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. will just have to make do with less manpower for their power plant operations.

Over 20 "highly-skilled" CUC power plant workers are still not allowed to go to work today.

"At this point the only thing we can do is get [the permits] as soon as possible and try to get some of the people on the job," acting executive director Gary Camacho said.

"We have a very good of people that's currently [at the power plant]. They just have to take on more responsibilities. We appreciate everything they do and we have a lot of confidence in them," he added.

However, Camacho admitted that there might be some work that won't get done because of the significant number of employees that are still not able to resume work.

"Some work is obviously not going to get done," Camacho said,

"We hope that we're not going to have any real issues," he added.

Asked if he can assure the public that there will be no interruptions or effect with regards to the power supply for the commonwealth, Camacho said, "It's hard to say."

"You have to understand that if there are any emergency situations involved then obviously we're not going to have the same number of qualified skilled labor force that we normally do until the 16th," Camacho said.

Camacho said they are looking forward to having their permits processed no later than Jan. 16— an assurance made by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to the utilities company.

"We respect the decision by the court and we'll move forward with the best of our abilities," Camacho said.

Mayor's Office to focus on tourism, community safety initiatives in 2016

The Saipan Mayor's Office aims to work on a number of projects for 2016, which include beautification, tourism, and safety initiatives for the community.

"We have a lot of plans to do for 2016 and we're looking forward to really working hard and try to accomplish what we set to do this year," Mayor David Apatang said.

According to Apatang, they will be developing a parking area and foot trail to the Old Man by the Sea.

"When tourists go up that area, they just park along the road. I asked the Department of Public Lands to survey the location up there so that we can have a parking at the top and do the trail, a wider trail going down to the site," Apatang said.

He added that they will also develop the Blue Hole in Talofofo as well as the Puttan Naftan Historic and Lookout Site.

"There is a Japanese canon there that's been sitting for a long time. We want it to be a tourist site also," Apatang said.

Apatang said they will continue their stray dogs program and the beautification of Beach Road.

The Mayor's Office said it will also pursue grants from the Office of Insular Affairs to be able to purchase additional road maintenance equipment such as small dump truck, small bulldozer, and a small road compactor.

"Right now, we're renting equipment from the outside and we're spending a lot of money on it. If we secure this money from OIA, that will help us save a lot," Apatang said.

They are also looking at establishing north and south heavy equipment shop.

The mayor added that they will have community improvement programs to deter crimes against property, eliminate blight as well as improve the Neighborhood Watch.

"I know there's a federal grant that we can secure for that," Apatang said, "If we can have that, we can hire people to monitor the villages on a daily basis."

Apatang said the current Neighborhood Watch Program on some villages needs to be more organized and well established to make it more effective. ***(Frauleine Villanueva-Dizon)***

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FEMA obligates $355K to Mayor's Office for Soudelor cleanup

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
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REPORTER

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has obligated more than $355,000 to the Saipan Mayor's Office, according to special assistant Henry Hofschneider.

He said the money from FEMA is reimbursement for what they spent for village-to-village debris removal was already received by the central CNMI government.

"We just need to make documentations to the Capital Improvement Project office which is the temporary FEMA point of contact here. We're working on that, we're going to submit a bunch of documents," Hofschneider said.

The total cost for the clean-up efforts was at $395,380. The 90 percent federal share was at $355,482, while the Mayor's Office will shoulder the 10 percent, which is at $39,538.

This cost includes both labor and equipment expenses.

Hofschneider said the cost share of the Mayor's Office will come from their general funding budget.

The Mayor's Office also submitted project worksheets to FEMA for the repair of the animal shelter in Lower Base, the equipment shop in Chalan Kanoa, and the chain link fence of Sugar King Park.

The total cost for this was estimated to be at $474,074.

These projects would have to be built first before FEMA will reimburse them for the costs.

Hofschneider said they will have to submit progress billings.

He added that they would retain the design of these facilities but may add mitigation measures. Another requirement from FEMA is that they would have to have insurance for these facilities.

Hofschneider said they need to collaborate with the Department of Public Works in establishing the scope of work for the projects.

"In order for us to start construction on the animal shelter and the Chalan Kanoa equipment shop, we need DPW's assistance to design the roof and electrical system. So that when we put that out for bid, interested bidders can have specifications," Hofschneider said.

"We've communicated with Public Works and the secretary has assigned someone to help us wrap up the design and scope of work," he added.

US wants reduction in fishing days committed to in agreement

PAGO PAGO, American Samoa (The Samoa News)— Not only does the U.S. government want a reduction of fishing days in the treaty for U.S. vessels to access Pacific Island Party (PIP) waters in 2016, it is also seeking a large reduction in the amount the US fishing fleet pays annually as part of the agreement, according to a Dec. 31 news release by the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries (FFA), the administrator of the Treaty. However the FAA says, "this is an untenable situation."

The release provided what FFA says, is an "Explanatory Note on the status of the Treaty between Pacific islands countries" and the U.S. government. It recalled that last August the Parties to the Treaty reached an agreement regarding the conditions for access to PIP waters for 2016 and signed a "Statement of Intent" (SOI) that reflected this agreement.

While the agreement is between PIP and the U.S. government, it describes obligations that fall to US vessel owners through the American Tunaboat Association (ATA).

The SOI provides 6,250 fishing days in the region and in return the industry agreed to pay $68.27 million—which is to be paid in quarterly installments with the first payment due Jan. 1, 2016 and the payment is made through ATA. Additionally, the U.S. government provides $21 million annually for economic assistance to the PIPs.

Last November, FFA says it received an advisory from the U.S. government that the U.S. industry was unable to make the first quarterly payment because of economic conditions within the fleet and that means some vessels no longer require or can afford the days that they committed to last August.

FFA revealed that the U.S. proposed to revise the 2016 agreed SOI—to reduce the number of fishing days by 1,930, with an associated reduction in the ATA annual payment of almost $23 million.

However, PIPs had a number of concerns with the proposed revision.

"The principal issue being faced is the timing. Having made an agreement with the U.S. in August 2015, most PIPs, and particularly those who participate in the Vessel Day Scheme—the Parties to the Nauru Agreement and Tokelau—have entered into agreements with other vessels and flag States to sell their remaining fishing days," FFA says.

Additionally, most PIPs have completed their sales, so agreeing to reduce the U.S. allocation by 1,930 days brings in certain risks that could result in substantially reduced fisheries revenue to some or all PIPs.

"Given that those PIPs are all developing States, and have already budgeted on the projected revenue from the agreed SOI, this is an untenable situation," FFA says. "As such, PIPs have determined that at this stage they cannot accept the revised proposal and as such, expect the US government and the ATA to make good on the agreement that was reached and signed in good faith."

In implementing their decision to hold the U.S. to the agreed SOI, the FFA says PIP has advised the U.S. government that no Treaty licenses will be issued on Jan. 1, 2016 unless the complete expected quarterly payment of about $17 million is received.

FFA stressed that the quarterly payment is not a new condition imposed by PIPs, but a requirement in the Treaty that licenses cannot enter into force until relevant payments have been made.

As of Dec. 31, FFA says it appeared certain that no payment would be forthcoming and that the US government has not lodged any license applications—as required by the Treaty—which further indicates that payment would not be forthcoming.

"It is unclear how this situation arose on the part of the U.S. industry. The main point of contention in the August 2015 negotiations was that the U.S. fleet insisted on more days than the PIPs were willing to provide," FFA explained.

"After several rounds of negotiation, PIPs were eventually able to allocate the number of days that the fleet was requesting," it says. "PIPs do not understand how the U.S. delegation, and particularly the industry members, overestimated their required effort in the order of 30 percent, especially given that they were already complaining of being burdened with excess days for 2015 at the time.

PIPs are also unable to comprehend how the U.S. would expect them to accept such a substantial change to the agreed SOI some 3 months after it was signed and only 2 months before the fishing season commences, said FFA.

"The timing of this issue is doubly unfortunate" as it comes on the back of a PIP Ministers meeting in Nadi last October where Ministers reaffirmed their strong commitment to the Treaty and put in place a process for the development of a more sustainable and flexible model for U.S. vessels to obtain access to PIP waters into the future.

CUC

From Page 1

Services Director Leon Rodriguez are ordered to file their opposition brief by Jan. 16, 2016.

The plaintiffs, through counsel James Sirok, sued defendants Johnson, Saldana, and Rodriguez over the delayed renewal of their Commonwealth-only worker, or CW-1 permits. CUC also asked the court to issue a TRO.

Asked for comments about Manglona's denial of their request for TRO, Sirok said although the TRO was not granted, the judge set the matter for a preliminary injunction hearing combined with a hearing on the merits of the case (trial) to commence on Jan. 21.

Sirok said USCIS has assured CUC that the petitions for its 20 CW-1 workers, including the 18 plaintiffs, will be processed (adjudicated) by Jan. 16, 2016.

Sirok said USCIS also represented to the court that all CW-1 petitions for the CNMI, regardless of the date of filing, will be processed by Jan. 16.

Sirok said CUC continues to maintain that all CW-1 transitional workers, including CUC's, are authorized to continue to work past the expiration of their authorizations for a period of at least 10 days under 8 CFR 214.2(w)(16), and until USCIS makes a determination on the petitions once they are timely filed under Section 558 of the federal Administrative Procedure Act (5USC 558).

Sirok said the question of whether USCIS can take the position that CW-1 transitional workers may not continue to work after the expiration date shown on their authorizations is an issue that needs to be addressed in light of these two provisions of the law, and the fact that it will continue to be an active question for employers of CW-1 workers as long as the transitional period in the CNMI continues and the ability of employers to extend the period of authorization for their CW-1 workers during this period available.

Sirok said while USCIS pointed its finger at CUC for delaying its filing of the petitions for the extension of stay for the CW-1 workers who are plaintiffs in this case, it should be noted that it is DHS and USCIS that has delayed the adoption and implementation of the proposed rule change it published in May 2014.

He said the proposed rule change would have provided for the continued ability of a CW-1 worker to work for up to 240 days after the expiration date of the CW-1 authorization while the petition for extended stay was being processed.

"It is highly probable that if this proposed rule would have been adopted after publication the calamity that the CW-1 employers and the CNMI has faced since Dec. 31, 2015, in the closing of businesses, loss of revenue, and overall economic harm would have been avoided," Sirok said.

"In this respect, the better question is why hasn't DHS and USCIS adopted this rule change after publishing that it is in the best interest of DHS, USCIS, the public, and the CW-1 employer/employee to do so?" Sirok said.

In defendants' opposition to the TRO, assistant U.S. attorneys Jessica F. Cruz and Mikel W. Schwab said CUC only filed its petitions for extension of the workers' status last Dec. 28—a mere three days prior to the expiration of their nonimmigrant status.

CUC acting executive director Gary P. Camacho testified at the hearing that the affected foreign workers are all highly skilled personnel assigned at the power plants in Lower Base.

STORE

From Page 1

Soudelor featuring bargain deals on apparel, accessories, toiletries, furniture, and other household items.

The business was considered a hotspot for bargains on name-brand items not found anywhere else on island. Yesterday afternoon three Matson containers filled with several items sat in the parking area at a standstill.

Youn states that they employ 100 employees throughout the company and that 27 CW workers are affected by the Dec. 31, 2015, permit expiration and delays.

"We officially announced to all the employees that we'd be closing the Pop-Up Store. We have to relocate the U.S. citizen workers to other stores to keep up with operations and the tourist market," he said.

He was expecting at least four employees to be renewed in the batch of 800 approved workers announced yesterday, but instead the company was issued an RFE or request for evidence instead.

An RFE is made by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services when an immigration or visa application is lacking required evidence, or the immigration officer needs additional evidence to determine the eligibility of an applicant for the benefit sought.

"We sent the applications out on time, the recommended 90 days, but there was a delay with the U.S. Postal Service and it took pretty long to get there. This was a new concept store and we were about to take off but we have no other option but to close down now," he said.

He stated that the four critical employees make up accounting and IT personnel with the remaining 23 employed as language skill workers who cater to the Chinese and Korean market.

He says that many employees are currently working overtime.

When asked whether the company was looking to hiring U.S. workers to mediate the situation, he says, "we are always open to hire U.S. workers who have the language skills but it's very difficult here. We can only issue a work-stop order knowing [our employees] have no way to make a living. It was a really hard decision but we can't go against the law. I just hope that we can have these workers soon so we can open the store and get back to normal operations," he said.

FUNERAL

From Page 1

and staff, and State of Yap Lt. Gov. James Yangtemai.

Other dignitaries include Jerome Ierome who will be representing the American Samoa governor, former Guam governor Felix Camacho and his wife JoAnn Camacho, Lt. Gen. Anthony Crutchfield, a three-star general and the deputy commander of the U.S. Pacific Command in Hawaii, as well as several U.S Coast Guard captains and lieutenants.

Guam Senate president Judith WonPat has also confirmed her attendance, as well as Guam mayors Melissa Savares of Dededo and Carol Tayama of Agat.

Yangtemai also paid a courtesy visit to the new administration of Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Lt. Gov. Victor Hocog yesterday. He expressed condolences for Inos' passing and heard thanks from Torres for Yap's support during post-Typhoon Soudelor recovery, with the Yapese linemen that flew over to help the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. rebuild.

Justices reverse man's 2013 kidnapping, rape conviction

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The CNMI Supreme Court has reversed the conviction of Michael Anthony Jackson, who was slapped in 2013 with 40 years and six months imprisonment for kidnapping and raping a 15-year-old girl on Saipan.

In an opinion issued last Dec. 30, the high court justices remanded Jackson's case to the Superior Court for a new trial.

The justices ruled that Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho erred in not repeating substantive jury instructions at the close of evidence.

"In our view, Rule of Criminal Procedure 30 requires the trial court to give a comprehensive set of jury instructions at the end of the case, even at the cost of repeating earlier instructions," said the high court's opinion penned by Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro and concurred by Associate Justices John A. Manglona and Perry B. Inos.

The justices said closing instructions allow the jury to focus on the law, the evidence, and its responsibilities in order to arrive at a proper determination.

"Because of the importance of ensuring the jury's understanding of the law and the requirements of Rule 30, we conclude that the failure to reiterate substantive jury instructions at the end of the trial is reversible error," the justices said.

The justices said the victim testified under oath; Jackson had the opportunity to cross-examine her; and the judge, jury, and Jackson were able to review her demeanor while she testified.

Therefore, the justices said, although they find that Camacho erred in his application of Section 1318, they find no violation of Jackson's Sixth Amendment right to confrontation.

Section 1318 allows the use of closed-circuit television for child witnesses who find it difficult to communicate effectively under normal courtroom procedures.

The justices said based on a plain reading of the statute, it is clear and unambiguous that Section 1318 only applies to child witnesses under the age of 16 at the time of trial.

The victim was 17 at the time of trial.

At the appeal hearing, attorney Mun Su Park argued as court-appointed counsel for Jackson. Assistant attorney general Graef Clayton argued for the government's opposition.

On April 26, 2013, the jury found Jackson guilty of kidnapping and sexual assault in the first degree. Camacho, who decided on the misdemeanor charge, also found the defendant guilty of assault.

Police said the girl was walking along Tun Joaquin Doi Road in Fina Sisu from an Internet café and was on her way home on Oct. 9, 2010, at about 1am when Jackson forced her into his car, brought her to an open field at the Saipan airport, and raped her inside his car. He then forced the girl to smoke methamphetamine or "ice."

The girl later managed to run away, police said.

On May 15, 2013, Camacho slapped the then-34-year-old Jackson with a maximum jail term of 40 years and six months without possibility of parole.

Jackson then appealed. He asked the CNMI high court to reverse his convictions and remand the matter for a new trial, or in the alternative for re-sentencing.

The issues presented in Jackson's appeal are whether Camacho erred by reading jury instructions that included elements of the charges prior to the evidentiary phase of the trial, whether the judge incorrectly interpreted and applied a statute, whether the judge erred when he declined to order a presentence investigation report, and whether the judge abused his discretion by imposing the maximum sentence.

The justices only ruled on the first two issues, saying they leave undecided the remaining issues because the jury instruction error yields the same relief the others would garner if granted.

In the government's opposition, then-assistant attorney general James B. McAllister, contended that Camacho did not commit plain error by reading a typo in the jury instructions because the judge promptly and properly corrected the instructions.

McAllister said the judge did not commit plain error in reading the jury instructions at the beginning of trial because the jurors were better informed and better prepared to proceed with trial.

McAllister said the judge correctly interpreted the statute because the term "child" is easily understood as anyone under the age of 18.

He said the judge correctly applied the statute because the victim suffered great emotional trauma testifying in open court.

McAllister said Jackson's right to confrontation was not violated because the judge used the least invasive means to accommodate the girl and Jackson and his counsel were still present in the courtroom when she testified.

McAllister said Camacho did not abuse his sentencing discretion because Jackson's criminal history and the facts of this case justify serious punishment.

TO REOPEN TINIAN DYNASTY'S CASINO

HKE seeks court approval to obtain $5M loan

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The owner of Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino is seeking authorization from U.S. District Court for the NMI's Bankruptcy Court to obtain a $5-million loan from a lender, Chen Chien Yeh, in order to allow it to reopen the casino portion of the business.

Hong Kong Entertainment (Overseas) Investment Ltd. counsel Timothy H. Bellas said HKE believes that this funding to pay its liabilities and to fund its working capital needs in order to allow it to reopen the casino business.

In HKE's motion, Bellas said without the post-petition financing requested, HKE has insufficient cash liquidity to achieve its reorganization under the Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

Bellas said HKE believes that the terms offered by lender Yeh are substantially more favorable than what HKE could expect from other lenders, since Yeh is not seeking a security interest or lien on HKE's assets.

Asked by *Saipan Tribune* about Yeh's background, Bellas said he met him once in another lawyer's office and that he does not know much about him.

"He (Yeh) agreed to loan the corporation money in order to achieve its reorganization," the lawyer said.

HKE president Chun Wai Chan recently filed Chapter 11 bankruptcy petition. He said the board agreed that it appears and essential to seek the protection of the bankruptcy court in order to have the opportunity to formulate a plan for the rehabilitation of the corporation through reorganization.

According to HKE's bankruptcy petition, the corporation has total assets of $55.2 million, but its total liabilities is $273.5 million.

Last week, HKE asked the court's permission to pay taxes and fees that may become due while the bankruptcy petition is pending.

HKE estimates it owes the Internal Revenue Service $315,989.69 in withholding taxes and the CNMI government $372,456.96 in taxes, for total tax liabilities of $688,443.65.

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OAG vigilant against illegitimate charities

By DAISY DEMAPAN
daisy_demapan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The National Association of Attorney Generals recently formed a committee that will be looking into charities in an effort to keep consumers and businesses from becoming victims of a scam or theft.

According to CNMI Attorney General Edward Manibusan, "the OAG has a responsibility to protect charitable assets and ensuring that they are properly managed and spent."

After the onslaught of Typhoon Soudelor, an increase of charitable causes began soliciting for donations as well as providing direct relief to the community.

Manibusan

"There have been an increase in the number of non-profit corporations who have solicited donations for charitable cause and we want to make sure the donations go to the intended beneficiaries," Manibusan said.

Currently, there have not been any reported cases on sham charities but the OAG says they will respond when a case is reported.

The National Consumers League or fraud.org states that if you are approached by an unfamiliar charity to contact a local consumer protection agency to confirm their legitimacy.

Consumer protection in the CNMI, as is monitoring charities, continues as a joint effort between Manibusan and Guam Attorney General Elizabeth Barrett-Anderson after a cooperative agreement in December to enhance the protection of consumers in Guam and the CNMI allows for the pooling of resources and the conducting of joint investigations regarding matters that affect consumers in both jurisdictions.

If you suspect that a charity may be illegitimate, contact your Attorney General office at 664-2341.

MEET THE MAYOR FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON

Twenty-three students from South Korea met with Saipan Mayor David Apatang last Tuesday as part of their Costa World Tour English Camp. The students will be on island for a month and will attend English classes at Eucon International School while also doing outreach and recreational activities.

Guam senator calls on White House to pursue war claims

Guam Sen. Frank Blas Jr. is requesting that the White House push for war claims on behalf of the people of Guam.

Blas' request comes on the heels of a statement released by the President's National Security Advisor, Susan E. Rice, congratulating the governments of Japan and the Republic of Korea on reaching an agreement on the matter of "Comfort Women."

Blas is now asking Rice to pursue this issue with regards to the Chamorro people.

"I would like to encourage you to take on the mantle of responsibility for being an advocate for Americans whose family members were brutalized as comfort women at the hands of Japanese forces during World War II," Blas wrote to Rice, adding that the Chamorro people endured unspeakable atrocities such as beheadings, rapes, beatings and so much more. "This cries for justice and our people have made many attempts through Congress to resolve war claim issues, but we have yet to have our war claims addressed."

Blas informed Rice that the number of Chamorro survivors from the war continue to lessen "… so we look to President Barack Obama to finally give our people the resolution they deserve, much like the agreement you applauded between Japan and Korea." Blas noted that Guam is an integral part of the strategic alliances in this region and this movement includes President Obama's pivot to the Asia Pacific Region.

"As such, it is my sincere hope that you will address this issue with the President in order to advance the dialogue on the unresolved war claims of Chamorros which lies heavy on the hearts of the people of Guam," Blas wrote.

For more information, please contact the Office of Senator Frank F. Blas, Jr., at 475-2527 or via email at frank.blasjr@gmail.com. ***(PR)***

Woman indicted in court for allegedly making false statements to USCIS

A federal grand jury indicted yesterday a woman who allegedly made fraudulent statements to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

The indictment charged Jonie Esther Babauta Uddin with one count of false statement.

According to the indictment, Uddin made false, fictitious, and fraudulent statements and representations to USCIS on Nov. 18, 2011.

In a form I-130, Jonie Uddin allegedly represented that she lived in Chalan Piao with Tamiz Uddin, which she knew such representations were false in that she did not live in Chalan Piao and had never lived with Tamiz Uddin.

Form I-130 refers to a U.S. citizen's petition for an alien relative.

Additionally, in the form G-325 (biographic information), the defendant again allegedly represented that she lived in Chalan Piao. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Guam governor to appeal tax refunds case to Supreme Court

HAGATNA, Guam (AP)—Guam Gov. Eddie Calvo is continuing to challenge a federal court order that requires the U.S. territory to pay tax refunds no later than six months after the tax-filing deadline.

The *Pacific Daily News* reports that the governor's attorneys filed an emergency application on Tuesday asking the U.S. Supreme Court to continue a stay on the government's mandate to pay the plaintiff's attorney fees.

Calvo's legal team has previously argued that the government of Guam shouldn't be liable for any attorney fees because Guam should be treated as a federal agency collecting taxes.

"The federal court ordered us to pay $1.7 million to the plaintiffs' lawyers based upon a federal law that the U.S. Supreme Court and even the Ninth Circuit previously ruled did not apply to Guam because of our sovereignty," Calvo said in a news release.

Calvo's attorneys have stated their intent to appeal the case to the Supreme Court.

The tax code does not set a payment deadline, but requires the payment of annual interest on unpaid refunds. The government of Guam for years has opted to pay the interest. The past four governors, including Calvo, have had to borrow money on the bond market to catch up with deluinquent tax refund payments.

The administration has been resisting requests by the taxpayers; plaintiffs in the case to pay their attorney fees, citing their intention to continue appeal the case.

After losing on appeal to the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court earlier this year, the governor had until Dec. 31 to file the petition with the U.S. Supreme Court for possible consideration of the case.

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM
HEAD START PROGRAM
P.O. BOX 501370, SAIPAN, MP 96950
Phone: (670) 664-3751/68 Fax: (670) 664-3760

Head Start Policy Council Meeting Agenda

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910(a), the Head Start Policy Council hereby gives notice that it will have a Turn-Over Meeting on Saturday, January 9, 2016 at 5:00 p.m. at the Latte Stone Room, Kanoa Resort, Susupe, Saipan.

I. Preliminary Matters
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Quorum
4. Adoption of Agenda
5. Adoption of Minutes
   June 15, 2015-Special Meeting
   November 6, 2015-Special Meeting

II. Council Turn-Over
1. Recognition of Outgoing Council Members for SY 14-15
2. Welcome and Introduction of Council Members for SY 15-16
3. Acceptance of Community Representatives for Saipan, Rota and Tinian
4. Election of Officers
   Pro Tem Chair - Jolene Guerrero
   a. Chairperson
   b. Vice Chair
   c. Secretary
   d. Treasurer

III. Next Meeting
IV. Adjournment

This meeting is open to the public, interested individuals are welcomed to attend. Anyone requiring special accommodations may contact Mrs. Candace Q. Celis at 664-3761; several days notice is required.

/s/ Roy Ada
Chairperson

Name: Andrew Sablan Salas
Ritchel Jocson Salas
P.O. Box 503830
Saipan, MP 96950

Telephone No.: (670) 285-0805

PRO SE

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In the Matter of the Petition for the Change of Name (s) of:	)	**FCD CN CIVIL ACTION NO. 15-0608**
Hyanna Grace Lumerio Jocson Mathew Anthony Lumerio Jocson Maria Isabella Lumerio Jocson	)	**NOTICE OF HEARING**
Minor Children	)	
By:	)	
Andrew Sablan Salas Ritchel Jocson Salas Petitioners	)	

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on February 4, 2016, at 10:30 a.m. in Courtroom 205A, before Associate Judge Kenneth Govendo.

Dated this 30th day of December, 2015.

/s/ By: Deputy Clerk of Court

Name: Isidoru N. Camacho/
Melissa M. Camacho
Address: PO BOX 504203
Telephone No.: (670) 285-0206/
(670) 285-0320

Pro se

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In The Matter Of The Adoption Of:	)	FCD-AD-CIVIL ACTION NO. 15-0625
DCMS 12/6/15 Minor Child	)	**NOTICE OF HEARING**
By:	)	
Isidoru N. Camacho/ Melissa M. Camacho Petitioner(s)	)	

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on the 11th, day of January, 2015 at 10:00AM in Courtroom 205A, before the Honorable Judge Kenneth Govendo.

Dated this 31st day of December, 2015.

/s/ By: Patrick V. Diaz,
Deputy Clerk of Court

MICHAEL A. WHITE, ESQ. F0122
THE LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC.
POST OFFICE BOX 5222
SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS 96950
TEL.: (670) 234-6547
FAX: (670) 234-9537

ATTORNEYS FOR Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In the Matter of the Estates of	:	**CIVIL ACTION NO. 04-0498**
MATEO M. TAISACAN and SABINA M. TAISACAN,	:	**AND CONSOLIDATES CASE**
Deceased.	:	**(C.A. No. 07-0289)**

SECOND AMENDED NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of the Estates of Mateo M. Taisacan and Sabina M. Taisacan in and to the following property: an agricultural homestead situated in Ginalagan, Rota, Northern Mariana Islands, designated as Tract no. 22127, containing an area of 25,000 square meters, more or less, as shown on the Division of Lands and Surveys' Official Survey Plat no. 2066/79 dated December 20, 1984.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on Friday, January 29, 2016, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at the Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 28th day of December, 2015:

/s/ MICHAEL A. WHITE, ESQ., F-0122
Attorney for Administratix

CARE set to take action on nine major cases

By DAISY DEMAPAN
daisy_demapan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Advocates for Recovery Efforts recognized the need to take action on nine major unmet needs cases after convening at the Governor's Office conference room yesterday.

The steering committee noted that identifying information of the families is confidential, but that an ongoing process to gather resources continues with the American Red Cross-NMI Chapter awaiting on a couple of receivables from the CNMI government.

The Coordinated Assistance Network, or CAN, which has been the driving force in determining the eligibility of clients who need assistance with rebuilding their homes, reveals that a total of 318 cases have been closed with 810 current open cases. The top 3 needs for home repair and rebuilding, household goods in terms of appliances, and household goods such as furniture, as reported in November still remains the same.

CARE's construction committee, in considering home options, visited the Greenstay homes in Garapan but has not considered the option as pricing of the homes is unclear.

The public health committee noted that they are hoping to begin a mobile clinic by the end of January or the beginning of February and future plans for establishing a free clinic is under consideration.

The volunteer management committee, supported by Best Sunshine International, Ltd.'s corporate social responsibility team after Americorps' departure will be conducting a debris removal in Koblerville from 8:30am to 12pm. The meeting site will be near the basketball court at the Koblerville Youth Center.

CARE director Jenny Hegland noted that the concept paper for two Americorps VISTA positions has been approved and a final application will be submitted in the next few weeks.

She added that no match funding will be necessary and the program allows for the recruiting of a resource development person for CARE and for food pantry development for Karidat.

CARE's next general membership meeting will be on Jan. 19. Interested community members are encouraged to attend.

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- The human papillomavirus (HPV) test looks for the virus that causes these cell changes.

The only cancer the Pap test screens for is cervical.

HPV is the main cause of cervical cancer.

- HPV is a very common virus, passed from one person to another during sex.
- Most people get it, but it usually goes away on its own.
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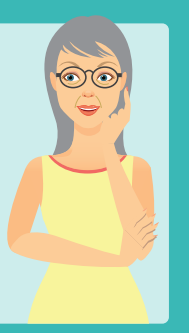
Most women don't need a Pap test every year!
Have your 1st Pap test when you're
21
If your test results are normal, you can wait 3 years for your next Pap test.

HPV tests aren't recommended for screening women under 30.

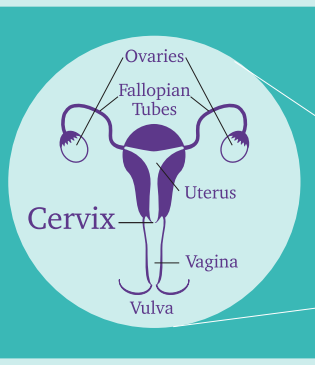
When you turn 30 you have a choice:
If your test results are normal, get a Pap test every 3 years.
OR
Get both a Pap test and an HPV test every 5 years.

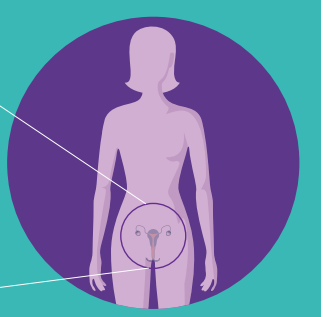
You can stop getting screened if:

- You're older than 65 and have had normal Pap test results for many years.
- Your cervix was removed during surgery for a non-cancerous condition like fibroids.



The cervix is the lower, narrow end of the uterus (womb) that connects the uterus to the vagina (birth canal).





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Northern Islands mayor meets with Guam mayors

By DAISY DEMAPAN
daisy_demapan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

In efforts to bring awareness and advocate the preservation of the Northern Islands, Mayor Jerome Aldan met with Guam mayors yesterday to discuss future plans and developments.

In Chamorro, he addressed the Guam mayors on his intentions of showcasing Pagan as a vital natural resource during the Konferensian Dinana Islas Marianas, a two- to three-day conference to be held next year in June on the island.

Aldan spoke to the Mayors Council on Guam in late December and has renewed their previous discussion on the matter for educational and historical investment again.

He expressed that despite the differences between the islands exacerbated during and after World War II, all Chamorros share a common need to connect and return to their roots.

The Mayors Council of Guam expressed concern on whether the U.S. military currently had control over the islands and whether future developments would be possible, a sentiment expressed all over Guam due to the island's stringent military controls and inhabitation.

Part of the conference, the mayors said, is to discuss the use of pozzolan deposits of Pagan as a way to improve its infrastructure and promote sustainable business ventures.

Pozzolan is often used in construction as cement replacements rather than cement additions. However, adding pozzolan to an existing concrete mix increases strength and density, which would promote economy-building activities.

Aldan hopes that at least 100 individuals made up of investors, public officials, and community members will take part in the historic event.

He adds that the distance between Saipan to Pagan is 200 nautical miles, which takes about 14 to16 hours by boat.

Aldan, along with Northern Islands Mayor's Office consultant William Torres, began the discussion with the mayors in December to seek potential sponsors for the trip.

The additional intent of the discussions is to emphasize the preservation of the Chamorro culture and allow people from the Marianas a firsthand look into the continuing practices of living before the influence of American culture.

Further talks include the potential for a cruise line industry originating from Japan.

Dededo Mayor Melissa Savares noted that the cruise line could follow the route of the Northern Mariana Island chain featuring the agricultural area, lake tour, hot springs, and history of Pagan.

She expresses that as Guam still tries to determine their political status with the military, the collaborative undertaking represents the need to revive culture and invest in the islands as one unified Marianas.

The Northern Islands mayor will resume talks on the possible development today.

No casualties in Tonga from Cyclone Ula

NUKU'ALOFA, Tonga (Matangi Tonga)—Initial reports have confirmed no casualties in Vava'u which has escaped major damage to infrastructure, apart from fallen trees due to Tropical Cyclone Ula over the last 24 hours. A state of emergency issued only for Vava'u and Ha'apai remains in force to be reviewed. While Tonga's climate experts say that a lack of moisture to drive the system prevented it from intensifying into a devastating Category 4 or 5 storm.

A state of emergency issued only for Vava'u and Ha'apai remains in force and is being reviewed while the cyclone remains in Tongan waters.

Deputy Prime Minister Hon Siaosi Sovaleni in his capacity as Chairman of the National Emergency Management Committee said in a press conference this afternoon that no casualties were reported by police and they had checked with the hospital and verified with town officers in Vava'u. He said the state of emergency declared last night was specifically only for Vava'u and Ha'apai and not the whole country.

"The state of emergency remains until we have a complete picture of what is happening in Vava'u, we will be reviewing it continuously to see whether it warrants to keep it," he said.

» Vava'u, Ha'apai hardest hit by powerful storm

The committee would have a better idea later this afternoon of the damages when people went out to look at their houses.

"We had 11 evacuation centres, over 390 people were relocated to these evacuation centres. At about 3:21 am electricity was shut down for safety reasons but we are hoping to restore power this afternoon."

An operational centre was based in the police headquarters last night but but now relocated to the Governor's office while an operation centre has been working from the NEMO office in Nuku'alofa 24-hours a day, since 31 December.

He said there were reports that many trees had fallen down. Some had been cleared especially those to the wharf and Lupepau'u Airport in Vava'u

"We were expecting the worst last night as it was heading straight at Vava'u and fortunately it got diverted a little, we are fortunate -We are very happy that there are no casualties," Hon. Sovaleni said.

Ha'apai

'Ofa Fa'anunu, Director of Tonga Met said that Ha'apai was experiencing its strongest gusts from Cyclone Ula early this afternoon, with winds up to 40 knots—gusting to 60 knots (120kph). He said Tonga was lucky that a category 4 cyclone did not develop.

"One thing that is interesting is that it has been trying to intensify. Toward the south there is no moisture. It needs a lot of moisture to develop but it was moving in from an area of low moisture. We were surprised it was still sustained. It is still a category three right now. The winds around in the upper atmosphere are very favourable for developing [the cyclone] but the moisture from down below to provide the energy for the system is not there—just spinning, just very dry air coming up from down below brought up by the high. On another day it would probably have become a category five—if the moisture had been present it would have been the right ingredients for development into a much stronger system," said 'Ofa.

50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Adriano and Conchita Solis celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary last Dec. 31 during the New Year's Eve party at the LNT Apartments parking lot.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

January 7, 2000

SNILD okays issuance of resident IDs by mayors

On their final session, Saipan lawmakers yesterday approved a proposal allowing residents of Saipan and the Northern Islands to obtain identification cards from their respective mayor's office upon payment of a fee ranging from $7 to $15. The measure, offered by Rep. Melvin O. Faisao, will provide island residents an official document, if no other valid IDs are available like driver's license, that can be used for any legal transactions. Saipan Mayor Jose C. Sablan and the Governor's Developmental Disabilities Council had both endorsed the proposal since it will benefit the community in terms of identifying residents and citizens.

House tightens rule on garments exports

After nearly sitting for six months in the House of Representatives, a bill aimed at enforcing labor and safety laws in the garment industry was passed yesterday by 13 members present during its final session before adjourning sine die for the next Legislature. Senate Bill 11-125, offered by Senate Floor Leader Pete P. Reyes, will empower the Division of Customs to deny issuance of certificate for country of origin on finished apparel from factories found in violation of the laws and the code of conduct of Saipan Garment Manufacturers Association. This certification is required by the U.S. Customs before apparel merchandise manufactured in the Northern Marianas can be shipped to the mainland. During the discussion of the measure, the House deferred changing some of its provisions as the Senate can no longer act on the amendment as it had already adjourned for the current legislative term. It now heads to Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio for signing into law.

January 7, 2005

CUC told to explore alternatives to surcharge

Gov. Juan N. Babauta yesterday urged the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. to explore other means of reducing power generation costs, instead of implementing a fuel surcharge. In an interview, Babauta particularly mentioned a proposal by the Saipan Chamber of Commerce for CUC to consider using a cheaper type of fuel for its power plants. He said that based on his discussions with Chamber president Alex Sablan, he found the business group's suggestion "sound" and worth considering. He added that CUC should pursue the power plant privatization project, along with changing the fuel type being used. Sablan's proposal is for CUC to convert its power plant back to utilizing the No. 2 bunker oil, rather than using the more expensive low sulfur automotive diesel oil the plant currently burns.

Drydock project gets only one proposer

The Commonwealth Ports Authority is not expecting a decision to be made before February on the sole proposal for the drydock project. CPA executive director Carlos Salas said the authority is still in the process of reviewing the single proposal it received for the project. Aside from the slowdown of work during the holidays, the fact that CPA does not have much option in the project has caused the agency much difficulty in making a final decision, Salas explained. He expressed hope that the review will be finalized this month and that management will be able to make a recommendation to the CUC board of directors by next month. The project involves the construction of a small ship repair and manufacturing facility at the North Seaplane Ramp area of the Port of Saipan.

$6.9M food stamps issued

The Nutrition Assistance Program issued more than $6.9 million worth of food stamps in the CNMI in fiscal year 2005, based on the program's recently issued summary of expenditures. The report also shows an increase of 695 in the number of households receiving food stamps during the fiscal year. The report showed that, in fiscal year 2005—covering the period from October 2004 to September 2005—the program released $6,955,411 worth of food assistance to needy members of the CNMI community. Based on statistics provided by the program, Saipan-based beneficiaries received the biggest amount of food assistance this fiscal year at 93.4 percent or $6,493,105, followed by Rota, with 3.7 percent or $258,695. Next is Tinian, with 2.7 percent or $186,330, then the Northern Islands with only 0.2 percent or only $17,281 worth of benefits.

Improved Grotto opened to the public

Tourists and divers can now visit a new and improved Grotto, which was formally opened to the public Friday morning. Working up to his last day in office, Gov. Juan N. Babauta led a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Grotto rehabilitation project. Led by the Department of Lands and Natural Resources, the tourist site enhancement cost the local government $268,000. The improvements, done by RNV Construction, included the construction of a pavilion, walkways, restrooms, picnic tables and barbecue pits. It also includes a paved parking lot, an improved drainage system, and a lookout ramp for tourists. Babauta noted that the runoff that once went down into the Grotto has now been redirected to a ponding basin. The traffic congestion has been addressed with a circular driveway and with designated parking for buses and passenger vehicles. A viewing platform has also been built, allowing people to see the Grotto clearly without having to go down into the Grotto. Bathrooms and water catchments were also constructed to ensure that sanitary standards are maintained.

US Pacific Fleet smaller, even as China's military grows

By AUDREY McAVOY
ASSOCIATED PRESS

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii (AP)—The U.S. Pacific Fleet is shrinking even as the U.S. and its allies are facing challenges posed by China's growing military power.

U.S. Navy officials say the more advanced ships of today make up for the decline in numbers. But the Navy has also had to lengthen deployments and postpone maintenance to maintain its presence with fewer ships.

Peter Jennings, an expert at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute think tank, said the issue in peacetime is whether there are enough American vessels to reassure friends and allies.

"I think this is emerging as a serious long-term problem," he said.

The Pacific Fleet currently has 182 vessels, including combat ships like aircraft carriers as well as auxiliary and logistics vessels, said spokesman Cmdr. Clay Doss. That compares to 192 nearly two decades ago.

The Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy has more than 300 surface ships, submarines, amphibious ships and patrol craft, according to the Pentagon's Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy report released in August.

This all comes as China has grown more aggressive in asserting claims to islands also claimed by U.S. allies, including the Philippines in the South China Sea and Japan in the East China Sea.

AP
This Oct. 17, 2015 file photo shows a U.S. Navy fighter jet approaching to land on the U.S. Navy aircraft carrier USS *Theodore Roosevelt* during Exercise Malabar 2015 about 150 miles off Chennai, India.

China sees the U.S. military presence in Asia as an attempt to contain it, said Denny Roy, a senior fellow at the East-West Center in Honolulu. Beijing sees itself as returning to its rightful and historical role as the preeminent cultural and political power in the region, he said.

Since December 2013, China has built what the U.S. estimates to be 3,000 acres of artificial islands in disputed areas of the South China Sea using sand dredged from the ocean floor.

China has said the islands are meant to help ships, fishermen and disaster relief.

Questions about whether the Pacific Fleet has enough resources are more of a reflection of regional anxieties than the Navy's actual capability, said its commander, Adm. Scott Swift.

"I'm very comfortable with the resources I have," Swift said.

He pointed to the USS *Benfold*, a guided missile destroyer upgraded with new ballistic missile defenses, as well as three new stealth destroyers, the DDG-1000, in the pipeline, as examples.

One consequence of a smaller fleet has been more time at sea. Retired Adm. Zap Zlatoper, who commanded the Pacific Fleet in the 1990s, said deployments longer than six months made it harder for the Navy to retain sailors. Ships now deploy for an average of seven to nine months, though the Navy plans to lower this to seven.

Ship conditions have also suffered. The USS *Essex* left an exercise with Australia early in 2011 and skipped another with Thailand the following year because it developed mechanical problems after delaying maintenance to stay at sea.

Bryan Clark, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, a Washington think tank, said these are signs the status quo is unsustainable.

In a November report, Clark outlined alternatives: build more ships, though this would require money Congress may not give the Navy, or deploy less, though the Pentagon has been reluctant to accept less of an overseas presence.

The other choices: keep more ships at overseas bases where they would be closer to where they operate or mix up how ships deploy. One example would be to send fewer escorts with an aircraft carrier.

Guam ambulance company GM, staffer admit to fraud conspiracy

HAGATNA, Guam (AP)—Two employees of a Guam ambulance company have admitted guilt in a conspiracy to defraud the federal government of nearly $11 million.

Trevor Cruz and Jared Jay Ada pleaded guilty last week in federal court to conspiracy to commit health care fraud. Their plea agreements call for a maximum prison sentence of 10 years, *The Pacific Daily News* reported.

Both men are accused of participating in a scheme to fraudulently bill Medicare and TriCare for services rendered by Guam Medical Transport from March 2010 to March 2014.

Court documents say Ada is the company's general manager and Cruz is the billing manager.

Guam Medical Transport is authorized by Medicare and TriCare to provide ambulance service, but service is only covered when a patient has a condition that makes ambulance transportation "medically necessary and reasonable."

Prosecutors allege Ada and Cruz committed fraud in order to bill and collect for services that would have otherwise been ineligible for coverage.

The defendants' plea agreements include a provision that allows the court to hand down a sentence less than the maximum if they provided "substantial assistance" to investigators. Federal prosecutors will later determine whether the assistance was sufficient in the case for a reduced sentence.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Mohammad Khatib said an investigation into the case remains ongoing.

Cruz and Ada remain out of custody and are scheduled to be back in court on May 5.

'Bark in the Park' at AMP this Friday

This week in 1946 all combat dogs that were serving in the Pacific during World War II were returned to the United States.

In honor of these canine heroes, the American Memorial Park and Pacific Historic Parks will be hosting "Bark in the Park," an event commemorating their services during the war, on Friday, Jan. 8.

Starting at 3:30pm visitors will have the opportunity to personalize dog tags and make military decorations for their canine friends. The memorials located within American Memorial Park will be available for touring as well as posters spotlighting Saipan's canine heroes and handlers.

These canines were originally just pets donated to the war effort. They were sent to training (where many did not make the cut) along with their handlers and finally sent overseas to fight in the war. They alerted to Banzai attacks, provided security at night, detected booby traps, inspected enemy pillboxes, and so much more.

They saved many lives and helped keep morale up. At 6pm in the amphitheater of American Memorial Park the movie "War Dogs of the Pacific" will be shown (running time 45 minutes). We hope you all can join us for this event. During the event we ask that you please keep your dog on a leash and clean up after them. For more information, please contact Nicole Schafer at 670-989-7810. ***(NPS)***

Century Tours, Inc.
is inviting qualified U.S. workers to apply for the following positions:

(1) Inventory Assistant (Part-Time)
High School Diploma, GED or equivalent with at least six (6) months retail experience and at least three (3) months of prior receiving, stocking and inventory experience. Must be proficient in Microsoft Office applications (Excel, MS Word, Outlook, Power Point). Knowledge on the following equipment: POS terminal, photocopier/facsimile machine, and other items as necessary to accomplish assigned tasks. Must be able to lift at least 15 pound items and move up to 50 pound items using a trolley.

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(1) Customer Service Agent
High school diploma, GED or equivalent. Two (02) months work experience in Travel or Tour operation or sales or service based work environment. Preferably fluent in both written and oral communication in the English, Korean, Japanese, or Chinese languages.

(7) Tour Sales Representative
High school diploma, GED or equivalent. A minimum of six (6) months to one (1) year experience in a related field. Work experience with travel and tour operation is an advantage. Able and willing to work shifts, evenings, holidays, and weekends. Able to drive tourists safely through various tour routes. Preferably fluent in both written and oral communication in the English, Russian, Korean, or Chinese languages.

Interested applicants may send their applications to hr_ctr@tanholdings.com. To be considered, applications must be submitted not later than January 21, 2016. Applications for Employment are available at the Human Resources Department located at the Century Tours Office, Kanoa Resort, Beach Road, Susupe Village. Background checks and pre-employment drug testing will be required prior to employment.

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Qualified Women, Minorities, Veterans and Persons with Disabilities are urged to apply.

Northern Marianas Humanities Council
Navigating the Human Experience

Vacancy Announcement
Board of Directors
Northern Marianas Humanities Council

The Northern Marianas Humanities Council (Council) wishes to announce a vacancy on its board of directors.

The Council is a non-profit private corporation affiliated with the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Council's mission is to "foster awareness, understanding and appreciation of the humanities through support of educational programs that relate the humanities to the indigenous cultures and to the intellectual needs and interests of the people of the Commonwealth."

The Council's board is comprised of thirteen volunteer members who serve three year terms. The Council strives to maintain a board that reflects a broad cross section of our CNMI community. The ideal candidate will have a strong desire to promote the Council's mission, programs, and activities and to actively participate in fundraising activities. Board responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Attending regular Council meetings four times annually;
- Raising funds for Council programs;
- Recruiting community partners;
- Promoting awareness about the Council's mission and its programs in the community;
- Attending Council programs and activities;
- Participating in working committee meetings;
- Evaluating Council programs and activities;
- Reviewing grant applications;
- Providing input about the humanities from various community members, and
- Attending conferences, workshops and other meetings on behalf of the Council.

Applicants are invited to submit their letters of interest and resumes to **Robert H. Hunter, Chair, Northern Marianas Humanities Council at Post Office Box 506437 Saipan, MP 96950** or delivered to the Council's office located in the Springs Plaza Building in Gualo Rai, Saipan. All letters of interest and resumes must be received no later than 4:00 p.m. on Friday, **January 29, 2016.** For additional information, please contact the Council's Executive Director, Scott Russell, at telephone 235-4785 or visit the Council's website at www.northernmarianashumanities.org.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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WE NEED POLITICIANS WHO OPPOSE THE GAY AGENDA...!
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WELCOME THE STRANGER...
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EDITORIAL

Facing a long road on Syria, Islamic State

As the year ended, the campaign against the Islamic State militant group recorded some significant victories on the battlefield. Iraqi forces trained by the United States and supported by U.S.-led airstrikes regained control of the city of Ramadi and coalition attacks killed several Islamic State operatives, including two men linked to the gunmen who killed 130 people in Paris in November. In an interview with NPR, President Barack Obama said that the militants' self-declared caliphate had lost about 40 percent of the populated territory it had controlled in the region.

But no one should be under any illusion that Obama's campaign to "degrade and ultimately destroy" the Islamic State is on the verge of achieving the more ambitious of those objectives. Obama has acknowledged that progress probably will be gradual, even with an increase in U.S. and allied airstrikes and the deployment of U.S. special forces to Syria as well as Iraq. He told NPR that he hoped there will have been "significant progress in degrading" the Islamic State by the time he leaves office.

Moreover, exterminating the Islamic State will depend on diplomatic as well as military initiatives — notably negotiations on a cease-fire in Syria's civil war and the creation of new political arrangements in that country as provided for in a recent United Nations Security Council resolution. The strife in Syria, which has uprooted millions and contributed to a refugee crisis in neighboring countries and in Europe, has also contributed to the rise of the Islamic State.

The resolution approved by the Security Council on Dec. 18 calls for a political process aimed at producing a "credible, inclusive and nonsectarian" government and a new constitution and proposes new elections administered by the U.N. It also authorizes member states to "prevent and suppress terrorist acts" committed by the Islamic State, al-Qaida and similar groups.

The document is silent, however, on the future role of Syrian President Bashar Assad, whose brutal suppression of peaceful dissent was the prime cause of the civil war and the attendant humanitarian catastrophe. Russia continues to support Assad and insists he should be able to run in a future election. Although Obama has long maintained that Assad must "step aside," Secretary of State John F. Kerry recently said that the U.S. is not seeking "so-called regime change" in Syria. Reportedly, the U.S. will concentrate instead on pressing for an election process in which Assad would not enjoy an unfair advantage or be able to rig the results.

The notion that the brutal Assad would have any role in a future Syrian government is a bitter pill, and not only for Syrians. But the Obama administration is right to attach greater priority to ending the killing, stopping the hemorrhage of refugees and targeting the Islamic State. The question is whether Assad's opponents will feel confident enough about the negotiations to accept their outcome and lay down their arms.

For war-weary Americans, it's frustrating that the U.S. continues to be involved militarily in the Middle East, even if U.S. forces aren't engaged in frontline fighting. That frustration surely is shared by Obama, who made extrication of the U.S. from foreign wars a major theme of his administration. The president had no choice, however, but to respond to the threat posed by the Islamic State both to regional stability and

See SYRIA on Next Page

SAU

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime Vergara previously taught at SVES in the CNMI. A peripatetic pedagogue, he last taught in China but makes Honolulu, Shenyang, and Saipan home. He can be reached at pinoypanda2031@aol.com.

The old photo I have is the imposing circular Administration building reflected on the campus pool; it is a magnificent shot even if I took it, though it was probably taken by my photographer wife.

I spent almost four years teaching Chinese students at Shenyang Aerospace University (SAU), oral English, though Chen Yongqing, director of the International Education Center that employed my services got me there as a lecturer on Macro-Microeconomics after doing an hour demonstration lecture to both English-speaking Chinese students and international ones.

Foreign students who were later in the class were mostly from Nigeria (that delighted them when I revealed I got malaria in Ijede, Lagos Lagoon and knew where Abeokuta, Abuja and Kano were), a dab of Ghanaians, a Thai, and a French girl. But the University needed oral English teachers more, so I got segued solely into the role function; also judged students who memorized their lines to "speak" English in front of an audience.

There were six foreign nationals teaching English, a British and a Belgian from Europe, two Caucasians from Pennsylvania and Hawaii, and two Filipinos, one from Batangas and I. My wallet holds a Hawaii driver's license. A seventh in the faculty was a Chinese lady schooled in Charlotte, North Carolina (I lived in Greensboro before she was there), who married a Canadian-Chinese, and teaches to battle boredom but ensures that her only son gets the best education the society can offer.

The Belgian, Pennsylvanian, and "Hawaiian" are married to Chinese ladies; the Brit took a Chinese bride after I left, the Filipina remained single and is moving back to Pea Eye early 2016, and I with a local wife who takes care of aging parents in Shenyang after she plucked me out of Saipan.

The Belgian left for Anshan a few miles southwest of Shenyang to join his wife and their newborn child. The Pennsylvanian of Amish descent is a jolly German "Santa" married to a vivacious Chinese lady whose shrill voice once echoed on Chinese opera stage. Our Hawaii gentleman solemnly his evangelical faith up his sleeves, attractive to many who were left "spiritless" by secular communalism and Mao's communism, a ministry that is a not-too-public raison d'etre for his visa.

I turned 65 after I signed up. It delighted the two Americans for if I was employed at my age, they were safe in theirs. Foreign teachers ceased to be in the roster at 65 but Chen papers his sphere of influence with quotes of can-do bottle-half-full thinking and had the Foreign Affairs office grant my working visa (Party Secretary is one of the signs on his office door so he can very well be familiar with the hammer-and-sickle hierarchy) until President Xi Jinping decided to follow what was in the books in his anti-corruption drive, which clearly says that foreign teachers were not to be older than 65. I formally retired to avoid being formally dismissed.

That was almost two years ago. I am back to my old haunt in Saipan as the cold of Dong Bei gets under my skin I left as an elder statesman in a Shenyang Language Studio ran by a fellow of 25 known for surviving solely on his wits. His task is to offer a language immersion tour to Saipan for Chinese students, in addition to running review sessions for those taking standardized tests (e.g., CET, IELTS).

He visited Saipan and stayed a month; he brings members of his family in Shanxi on his next visit hoping to use the occasion to inform them that he does not hold a white collar job as they think he does, but actively runs a bar and fluffs his pillow in the language studio.

I moseyed over to Shenbei in December to promote the studio and check on the ground level dwelling we procured after I left the University where my in-laws moved into as they grow senile aches, he, with diabetes, a replaced hipbone, and artery contradictions, and she, with a deep cough and backache. Their old dwelling was on the fourth floor without elevators.

We took them away from familiar environs but given their physical condition, mobility was no longer a premium; they hardly see any friends anymore anyway (grandpapa sits on a wheelchair when going for medical attention and inches on a walker between his room and the TV). My wife plans to pay a portion of our house loan from the sale of the old apartment but the bank's bottom line remains bleak; it had not been easy to dispose of the unit in the current market.

SAU and Chen Yongqing remain beacons of hope. The school train pilots for the airline industries, and the library that Chen leads provides the necessary academic support to get a diverse studentry fit into a hyperactive China labor market.

The virtues of China's balancing act of the yin-yang may, however, be lost in the shuffle as monetary value dominates everyone's preoccupation. I thought I was treated over the holidays to a bag of grapes until it was announced that my spouse bought the fruit because it was on sale. Forget the delightful treat of a fruit basket!

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Oran areglu gi ha`anita

By JOHN DELROSARIO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands.*

Mañge` ginen Chief Justice i NMI Supreme Court as Señor Jose S. Dela Cruz pot seriosu na malabida siha guine entalu` manma-elihe yan manriku na bisnis. I nuebu na relasion esta nina` fan malefa haye ma-represesenta.

Madaña`e dos bisnes guine ni mikepble. Gi karera madiroga interes publiku pot interes niha mismu. Mayute` gi un` banda i publiku ni pumega siha guihe na puestu. Hu diseseha na lache este na asuntu lau mampos oppan gi pachot tautau-ta siha.

Gumuaha dibision entalu` siha yan i publiku. Siha i manguaha, i publiku ni fuetsau mana` fañufa` gi fache` miserapble i pepble. Tat ti masede gi amigun niha bisnes. I pumalu` bisnes ni numesessita lokue` ayudu manmanunog gi un` banda.

Mahasñgo mañega disision publiku pot casino ni mapunu` dis biahe. Haf` este na maña ha signifikika? Haf` na mana` faliñgu respetu gi disposision publiku gi este na asuntu? Magahet na machogue sin apas para i betsan niha? Haf` na kontodu gaston niha i dos kompania umapapase?

Afañielos, estague` siha na malabida kontra i publiku i ha apunta huyoñg si Judge Dela Cruz. Ha sosoyu` hit para tana` guaha tinilaika pa`gu na sakan gi eleksion offisiat publiku. Mauleg ta pega halom tautau ni man-unestu, sinsiyu gi kinimiten niha umayuda adelantun todus, yan manlistu manmachochu` para u alibia pinadesen mayotmiente.

I sapet ni megai pumadedese pa`gu tita mirese. Gaige areglu gi dos patman kanaita. Maila` tana setbe pot futtunan famaguon-ta.

Dichu i tiempu `nai hita mismu libianu ta aregla ha`anita sin pattisipasion i bumende hit lala`la`. Pa`gu na sakan eleksion tafan daña ya ta aregla halom gima`ta.

Tinige` Otru pot kuttura

Este i mañge` mau`udai lamayot patte gi haf` kinemprendeña i mamañge`. Siña hit na dos mañge` pot kutturan isla. Yangin ginen hiyuñg hau pues pot haf` lini`e-mu. Gi bandag-hu siempre haf` kinemprendeg-hu signifikasion i asuntu.

Hagu un` tuge` pot bailan serimoñas guine yan man-bonitan tatautau man-hoben siha na famalao`an. Guahu pot signifikasion dopbladan kanai yan haf` sustansian i selebrasion ayu na okasion. Esta deste tutuhon ti umafagcha` hit haf` sessu i asuntu.

I motibu gi bisita siempre ha fatta i mediu kesnuda na tatautau famalao`an ni megaiña kabo`ña ke hegsu` Papago`. Hana` aputau pot bisnis bailan isla siha. Guiya salape`. Guahu pot kuttura. I motibu mampos chagu`. Demoñu!

Este siha na modun tinige` ginen Uropa yan Amerika sineda` man-titige` na professot mañge` ni man-afamao guine giya Pasifiku. Tautau isla! Anaku` na pinetsige i para adumididi` umapega tatte sustansian bailan kuttura gi dinanche na plaset tinige`.

Dispues guaha lokue` yinauyau haf` na areglu para umatatiye gi tinige` siha ginen iya Pasifiku. Piot ayu na kuestion i haye gai arelgu para umatatiye. Marepara dispues na megai gi kutturan iya Pasifiku man-mapasa guatu gi hinerasion siha ginen estorian mañaina. Taimanu este mana patte gi areglon niha `nai apenas estoria ginen pachot mañainan niha? Estague` i difirensia.

Adumididi` siempre u fan masa` ma-atrebi siha lache na kinemprende pot sustansian kutturan isla. Gi hilu` inakomprende kontodu pot areglon haf` propiu na tinige` siempre umasatba ayu siha na linache.

Motibu: `Nai para bai` fañge` gi liñguahita kulan-yu` kesnuda sa` taya` tiniñgo`hu fuera de mafanagueg-hu uttimu gi segundu gradu. Hu birayu` tatte gi inadiñgan yan mañaina-hu, lepblon gima Yuus gi finu` Chamorro kontodu disision kotte gi liñguahita. `An guaha dinidahu hu espiha abison i man-su`antau, kabilosu yan man-menhalom.

Tat tihu sufa` na trompison gi fina` katsadan pinegan Españot yan pronunsiasion fino`ta. Adumididi` hu pula` ñaihon-yu` ginen este siha na leksion. Sige hu prekura tumuge` haf` gaige gi hinsog-hu gi todu manera. Tinaka` tiempu estake para bai lagse` mañge. Mauleg offisiun mañge sa` hinala hau halom gi bandan fotmat na finu` Chamorro ni un` pega dispues gi papet.

Si biuhu Elis P. Sablan tres eskaleran finu` Chamorro ha tuñgu`. I tiuhu Bilen (William S. Reyes) otro konsuttadot-hu. I mañaina-hu man-lagse` gi fitme yan kabales na finu` Chamorro. Lamayot patte hu tutuhon mañge` gi liñguahi-ta pot para bai` asegura na lagse`yu` taiguihe `an hu tuge` hinasog-hu gi finu` Eñglis.

Pa`gu guaha mas ke trenta mit (30,000) rumikononose tinige`hu gi online na gaseta kada Huebes. Hana` ma`aggem siñienteg-hu i finu` tautau-ta siha gi chagu` pot kulan huna`e siha appottunidat man-manaita gi liñguahen niha mismu. Kontodu man-amko`ña ke guahu ma-agradese este na animu. Mauleg ta bisita i asuntu sessu.

Tinayuyot: I puntan lañget adumididi` sige homhum gi lemlem tautau. Hu tutuhon metton na preparasion eksisiun retirun espirituat. Hu chochogue este gi kada uttimon i sakan.

Bonitu na kanton tasi ni inadotna troñku, pajaru gi asut mapagahes, freskon mañglu` yan ininan miyon na pution gi chagu` lañget yan imakulada na unai. Gi mismu tiempu hu kakanta "ginefsagan perlas". Ti hu tuñgu` haf` na este na kanta kada ratu mattu tatte gi hinasog-hu. Hu arastreha ginen manu mage.

Magahet na kulan abag ñaihon-yu` gi bandan espirituat. Parehu yan basu ni mediu bula. Debi bai` na`ye ta`lu hanom. Dispues de silensiu na tinayuyot-yu `nai hu pega papa` añklag-hu gi sagaña `nai mas klaru yan mauleg siñienteg-hu. Estague` `nai hu sosoda` katma yan trañkilu na siñiente i gaige i fiet na gachoñg-hu as Jesukristo `nai hu kahlañg ha`anihu.

Este na eksisiun espirituat libianu un` eyag muna` katma hinasso-mu diariu. Pega todu hinasso-mu gi tinayuyot Tatan Mame mientras un` fafaisen i Saina na un` pinipet gi halom gatdun katsada yan kañadan linala`. Adumididi` siempre un` soda` linibianu-mu.

Gagau-ye lokue` i mamopble yan namase` ayudu gi Saina puede guaha esperansa gi ha`anen niha. Pinadesen popble sumen makat. Esta ginen ennau-yu` na kañada mina` hu sen komprende chinatsagan popble. Bendision ginen i Saina.

China's electric car lesson

By LEVI TILLEMANN
Los Angeles Times

Levi Tillemann is managing partner at Valence Strategic, a fellow at the New America Foundation and the author of "The Great Race: The Global Quest for the Car of the Future."

Two years ago, I sat across a table from a high-level Chinese official discussing the country's then embarrassing foray into electric cars. China had promised to sell 500,000 such cars by 2011 and lead the world's transition away from oil. Instead, that year it sold exactly 2,338. "What would you do?" he asked. Surprised by his candor, I gave my two cents: Study successful policies in California. Then I tucked away my files and headed back to Washington.

I wasn't especially optimistic. Over the next 18 months, however, China transformed its sputtering electric vehicle industry into a global juggernaut, surpassing the United States as the world's largest market for this critical 21st century technology. At the end of 2015, China was on track to sell 180,000 electric cars, nearly 300 percent more than the year before and 20 times more than in 2013.

What happened? I claim no credit for this decision, but China did in fact look to California for inspiration.

Until recently, EVs were enormously expensive to build. Bringing the cost down would require technological innovation and mass production, which wasn't going to happen without a little coaxing from the government. In China, huge consumer incentives (almost $20,000 a car) weren't enough, and neither was political pressure on automakers. Quality was low, cost was high and the value proposition for Chinese consumers was not good. "Companies do not want to build these cars, and people do not want to buy them," one Chinese executive told me in 2011.

Many analysts suggested that China abandon the project altogether.

Instead, in 2014, the China Automotive Technology Research Center, which helps craft policy and standards for the national industry, invited California's regulators to Tianjin to explain their success. It also sent experts to the West Coast to learn more.

In California, regulators had required each automaker to produce an escalating percentage of EVs. Simultaneously, the state had built a synthetic market that allowed automakers to buy and sell EV credits (awarded for selling electric cars) among themselves, thus rewarding manufacturers such as Tesla that bet big on innovation. California also had invested heavily in public charging infrastructure, provided financial incentives to consumers, given EVs access to HOV lanes and otherwise helped tip the scales in favor of electrification. This bevy of policies was responsible for the advent of the consumer EV and today California accounts for about half of U.S. EV sales.

China was a quick study. Later in 2014, policymakers adopted a California-style EV mandate—though limited to government vehicle fleets. Beijing decreed that by 2016, 30 percent of municipal vehicles must use batteries or fuel cells. Financial subsidies were somewhat reduced. (The city of Shenzen's cumulative subsidy, for example, was about $14,000, compared with $18,500 before.) But the mandate and other incentives more than compensated. Many cities also now offer reduced parking fees, access to bus and HOV lanes and exemptions from stringent commuter restrictions.

In at least one sense, the Chinese have gone even further than California in encouraging EV use. To combat multi-day traffic jams and suffocating smog, major cities have throttled the number of license plates (auto registrations) allowed. In 2015 the average cost of a license plate in Shanghai was more than $18,000, and in Beijing there were nearly 200 applications for each registration granted. But cities including Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen have created special carve-outs for EVs. For example, Beijing allotted 30,000 free license plates for EVs in 2015.

China's nudging worked. In January 2014, China sold only 600 so-called new energy vehicles—predominantly electric cars. In December 2014, China sold more than 15,000 EVs as local governments scrambled to meet fleet mandates. In November of last year, China sold more than 25,000 electric cars—more than twice as many as the U.S. (Of course, China's overall auto market is also larger: In 2014, China sold about 24 million vehicles compared with the United States' 17 million.)

Washington provides a sad, sharp contrast. After binge spending on EVs during the 2009 stimulus, the federal government retrenched. It eliminated most of its expenditures on EV technology and practically zeroed out funding for charging infrastructure. Washington's conversation on electric cars has degenerated into partisan squabble.

Yes, California remains a bright spot, but other states are held back by a lack of direction from Washington, and not only in comparison with China. In November, Europe sold 19,500 electric cars, putting it far ahead of the United States.

Smart policy and regulation will be critical to supporting the transformative sectors of the 21st century — EVs, roboticization, automated vehicles, renewable energy, drones and even artificial intelligence. If Washington remains passive, America will be left behind.

SYRIA

From Page 10

to the safety of people in Europe and the U.S. who may be targeted by terrorists directed or inspired by the Islamic State.

But Obama is also right to rule out the use of ground combat forces in either Syria or Iraq—a policy Congress needs to affirm in a new Authorization for Use of Military Force—and to resist proposals (from Hillary Clinton, among others) that the U.S. establish a no-fly zone in Syria. As Obama noted, the Islamic State doesn't have an air force. Russia, however, does, and it has been carrying out airstrikes in Syria. A no-fly zone would create the possibility that the U.S. would down a Russian plane, a dangerous scenario.

In both Syria and Iraq, degrading and ultimately destroying the Islamic State will take time and will require not only military action but also compromise among hostile ethnic and sectarian groups, a process the U.S. can influence only indirectly. Persistence is important, but so is patience.

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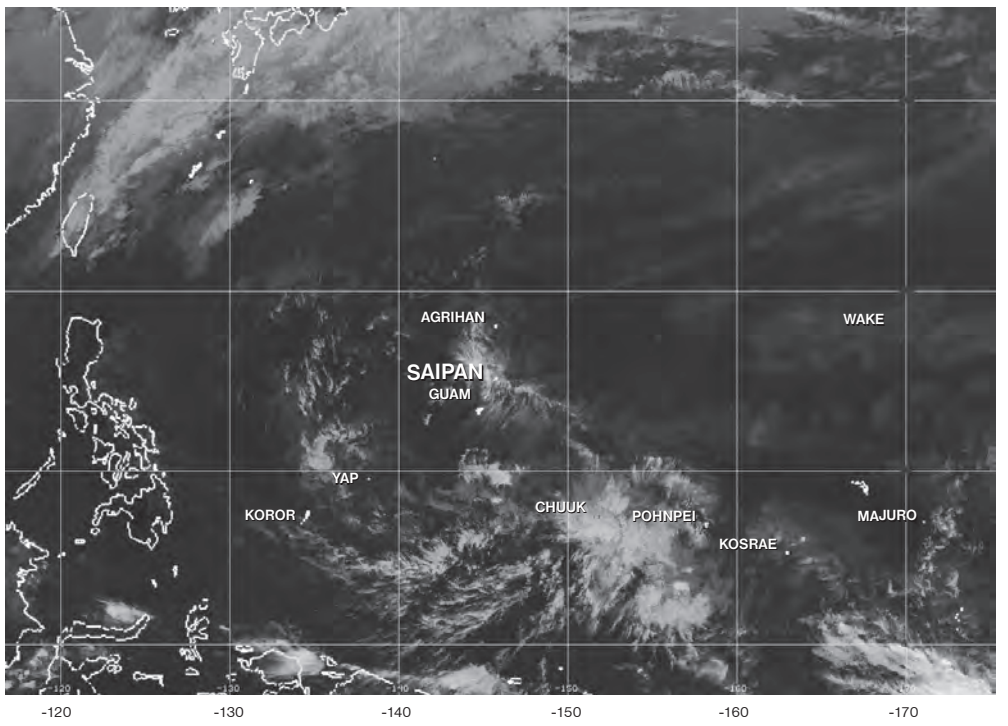
The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲85° ▼74°	▲85° ▼74°	▲86° ▼74°	▲86° ▼74°	▲86° ▼74°

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2016
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A near-equatorial trough heads eastward through 2N130E through a weak circulation centered southeast of Pohnpei at 4N160E to end near EQ175E. Weak trade-wind disturbances north of the trough are generating scattered showers northwest of Yap within an area bounded by a line from 16N132E to 12N140E to 7N135E back to 16N132E and south of Guam within an area bounded by a line from 11N144E to 11N151E to 5N144E back to 11N144E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are seen over Chuuk and near Pohnpei within 160 miles of a line from 9N151E to 1N159E and near Kosrae within 100 miles of a line from 7N161E to 5N167E.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

Micronesia

Guam And Rota	Thundershowers	▲85	▼78
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼77
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼77
Chuuk	Mostly Sunny	▲86	▼79
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	▲86	▼79
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼79
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	▲84	▼79

Around the Globe

Auckland	Thunderstorms	▲78	▼64
Beijing	Sunny	▲35	▼15
Hong Kong	Sunny	▲67	▼61
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	▲85	▼70
London	Rain	▲49	▼39
Los Angeles	Showers	▲57	▼43
Manila	Sunny	▲89	▼72
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	▲75	▼57
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲78	▼68
New York	Partly Cloudy	▲46	▼33
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	▲49	▼39
Paris	Showers	▲51	▼42
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	▲46	▼28
Rome	Showers	▲63	▼55
Salem	Partly Cloudy	▲44	▼31
San Francisco	Rain	▲53	▼45
Seoul	Sunny	▲37	▼20
Tokyo	Mostly Cloudy	▲51	▼38
Washington, DC	Cloudy	▲44	▼35

NMI CRIME STOPPERS
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- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Tides

Saipan Harbor

6:44 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.6 Feet
11:47 AM	Today	Low Tide:	1.1 Feet
5:05 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:45 AM	6:01 PM
Friday	6:45 AM	6:02 PM
Saturday	6:45 AM	6:02 PM
Sunday	6:46 AM	6:03 PM
Monday	6:46 AM	6:03 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	3:52 AM	3:36 PM
Friday	4:44 AM	4:27 PM
Saturday	5:38 AM	5:20 PM
Sunday	6:31 AM	6:17 PM
Monday	7:24 AM	7:14 PM

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 4, 2015

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA2924	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA2922	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA2921	1:30pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7 via Rota
UA2920	2:20pm	3:10pm	2, 3, 6
UA2928	6:05pm	6:55pm	Daily
UA2926	9:50pm	10:40pm	Daily

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA2921	1:30pm	2:05pm	1, 4, 5, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA2921	2:35pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL297	4:20pm	7:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ626	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ628	3:50am	7:40am	Daily
7C3403	4:35am	8:30am	Daily
7C3401	4:30pm	8:25pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	5:30am	3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN
OZ626/701	2:50am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA2924/191	4:15am	9:00am	3, 6 via GUM
UA2924/PR111	4:15am	9:20am	1, 2, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2924/183	4:15am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA2924/183	4:15am	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2922/183	8:40am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA2922/183	8:40am	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2921/183	1:30pm	9:30pm	5 via Rota-GUM
UA2921/183	1:30pm	9:50pm	1, 4, 7 via Rota-GUM
UA5038/183	2:20pm	9:30pm	2 via GUM
UA5038/183	2:20pm	9:50pm	3, 6 via GUM
UA5072/191	9:50pm	7:20am+1	1, 6 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ628/721	3:50am	12:50am	Daily via ICN
UA2924/159	4:15am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA2922/159	8:40am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA2921/159	1:30pm	10:35pm	1, 5 via Rota-GUM
UA2920/159	2:20pm	10:35pm	3, 6 via GUM

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA2923	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA2925	7:15am	8:05am	Daily
UA2921	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA2920	12:10pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6 via Rota
UA2927	4:45pm	5:35pm	Daily
UA2929	8:30pm	9:20pm	Daily

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA2920	12:10pm	12:45pm	2, 3, 6

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA2920	1:15pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:35am	3:10pm	Daily

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ625	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
OZ627	9:30pm	2:50am+1	Daily
7C3404	10:10pm	3:30am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	1:50am+1	3, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:30pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA190/2929	9:55am	9:20pm	2, 6, 7 via GUM
UA190/2929	10:00am	9:20pm	3 via GUM
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ702/627	12:30pm	2:50am+1	Daily via ICN
PR110/UA2925	10:05pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2925	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2921	10:55pm	1:00pm+1	3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2920	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	1 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2927	10:55pm	5:35pm+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2929	10:55pm	9:20pm+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2925	11:59pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/2920	11:59pm	1:50pm+1	2, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2927	11:59pm	5:35pm+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/2929	11:59pm	9:20pm+1	2, 5 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ724/627	2:20pm	2:50am+1	Daily via ICN
UA116/2925	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA116/2921	10:55pm	1:00pm+1	3, 6 via GUM
UA116/2920	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	1, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA116/2927	10:55pm	5:35pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA116/2929	10:55pm	9:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; 7C: Jeju AirETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
6:30AM	6:45AM	Mon, Tue,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily
1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

Business

US indexes end mostly higher; GM, Ford slip on sales miss

AP
In this photo made on Thursday, Nov. 19, 2015, a row of 2015 Ford F-150 pickup trucks are parked on the sales lot at Butler County Ford in Butler, Pa.

NEW YORK (AP)—U.S. stocks managed some small gains Tuesday, but not enough to make up for big losses from the day before.

Utilities and telecommunications stocks rose the most. General Motors and Ford dropped as their December sales fell short of analysts' estimates.

The Dow Jones industrial average gained 9.72 points, or 0.1 percent, to 17,158.66. The Standard & Poor's 500 index edged up 4.05 points, or 0.2 percent, to 2,016.71. The Nasdaq composite fell 11.66 points, or 0.2 percent, to 4,891.43, as shares of Apple sank 2.5 percent.

Stocks spent most of the day alternating between small gains and losses, and turned positive in the last hour of trading. The relatively stable trading came a day after a plunge in China's main index set off a bout of selling in global markets.

Despite increased tensions in the Middle East, energy prices continued to tumble because demand appears weak while global stockpiles are large. Analysts surveyed by Platts said they believe refining decreased last week and stockpiles will grow again.

U.S. crude fell 79 cents, or 2.1 percent, to $35.97 a barrel in New York. Brent crude, a benchmark for international oils, fell 80 cents, or 2.1 percent, to $36.42 a barrel in London.

The biggest losses belonged to drilling services companies. Ensco lost $1, or 6.3 percent, to $14.89 and Diamond Offshore Drilling decreased $1.05, or 4.8 percent, to $20.80. Transocean and Baker Hughes also fell.

Automakers reported that last month was the best December in the history of the U.S. auto industry, with 1.6 million cars and trucks sold. That helped make 2015 the biggest sales year in the industry's history. But shares General Motors and Ford slumped as their monthly totals fell short of analysts' projections.

Shares of GM fell 88 cents, or 2.6 percent, to $32.43 and Ford declined 25 cents, or 1.8 percent, to $13.72. Auto parts supplier Delphi Automotive gave up $2.33, or 2.8 percent, to $81.66.

Gun makers continued to trade higher as President Barack Obama announced executive actions intended to reduce gun violence and unregulated sales. The prospect of additional background checks and other restrictions often boosts demand for guns.

Smith & Wesson rose $2.58, or 11.1 percent, to $25.86 and Sturm Ruger gained $4.15, or 6.8 percent, to $65.54. Late Monday, Smith & Wesson raised its profit estimates for the year, saying sales were better than it had expected. The stocks also rose Monday because background checks surged in December, suggesting strong sales.

Smith & Wesson has more than doubled over the last year and Sturm Ruger is up 87 percent.

Spirit Airlines jumped after the company replaced CEO Ben Baldanza. Baldanza helped make Spirit into an "ultra-low cost carrier" with low fares and fees for everything from snacks, seat assignments, and space in overhead bins.

The company also became known for splashy promotions and "pre-reclined" seats that couldn't be lowered, letting the company fit more people on its planes. However shares were down by about half over the last year and in November they hit two-year lows.

Malaysia Airlines lifts baggage ban on Europe flights

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP)—Malaysia Airlines said Wednesday it has lifted a ban on check-in baggage on flights to Paris and Amsterdam, after the move angered many passengers who slammed the airline on social media.

The U-turn came less than 24 hours after the airline announced that passengers cannot check-in baggage for Tuesday and Wednesday flights to the two European cities due to "unseasonably strong headwinds" on a longer flight path it is taking.

The airline said it recently had to operate a longer route to Europe, via Egyptian airspace, for safety reasons. It said strong headwinds over the past four days were in excess of 200 knots, which can add up to 15 percent to fuel burn on its Boeing 777 aircraft.

"Based on its current risk assessment, done on a daily basis, the airline is now able to take a shorter route on European flights. Malaysia Airlines maintains that safety is of utmost priority in its operations and will not hesitate to adjust its flight path based on its daily risk assessment," it said in a brief statement.

It didn't elaborate on the change in route, and airline officials could not be reached immediately for comment. A Malaysia Airlines jet flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur was shot down by a missile in eastern Ukraine in 2014, killing all 298 people on board.

Many passengers left angry comments on the airline's Facebook page, slamming it for being the only airline to impose such a ban. Some of them said the airline should have limited the number of passengers and rejected freight instead. Others asked for a refund of their tickets.

Losses of two flights in 2014 hit the finances of already struggling Malaysia Airlines. One flight heading to Beijing disappeared and is believed to have crashed in the Indian Ocean. That tragedy was followed months later by the Ukraine disaster.

Last year, the airline appointed its first foreign CEO, Christoph Mueller, the former head of Ireland's Aer Lingus, to oversee a major restructuring. Mueller has said the airline can break even by 2018 after cutting 6,000 staff, selling surplus aircraft and refurbishing its international fleet.

New TV tech promises sharper colors, but not much to watch

LAS VEGAS (AP)—For years, TV makers have focused on making pictures sharper by squeezing more pixels onto screens. Now, their attention is shifting to improving the way sets display color, with a newish technology called HDR taking center stage.

HDR, or high dynamic range, promises brighter whites, darker blacks, and a richer range of colors—at least when you're watching the few select movie titles that get released in the format. Trouble is, there aren't all that many of those yet, and other HDR viewing options are likely to remain scarce for the immediate future.

Even worse, there are likely to be several different flavors of HDR, just to keep TV buyers on their toes.

HDR represents the latest effort by the world's television makers to goose demand for new sets. Global television shipments are expected to flatline this year, says research firm IHS—and that's an improvement over 2015, when shipments fell 4 percent.

TV makers are still touting the previous new new thing—4K, or ultra high-definition, sets, which have four times the pixels of current high-definition screens. While 4K has stopped the bleeding, it hasn't jolted the TV industry back to life, not least because such high resolution only makes sense if you sit up close and get a very large screen. (See our interactive guide to figuring whether 4K makes sense for you: http://bit.ly/1NnD49i .)

HDR faces some similar challenges. As with 4K, studios have to release movies and shows in the new format for owners to get the most out of new HDR sets. To date, there have been only a handful of releases, including "The Martian" and Amazon's original series "Mozart in the Jungle." More are coming, and Netflix aims to join Amazon this year in streaming some HDR titles, but getting an HDR-ready set still mostly means preparing for the future.

It's the same chicken-and-the-egg problem that previously confronted would-be buyers of Blu-ray discs, high-definition TV, 3-D TV and most recently, 4K.

Beyond that, there's the complicated issue of choosing between different versions of HDR. For starters, your version of HDR may look better or worse depending on the kind of set you get.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Twitter appears ready to expand beyond 140-character tweets

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Twitter appears ready to loosen its decade-old restriction on the length of messages to give its users more freedom and make its service more appealing to a wider audience. CEO and co-founder Jack Dorsey telegraphed that change is coming in a tweet he posted Tuesday a few hours after the technology news site Re/Code reported Twitter is exploring increasing its limits on text from 140 characters to as many as 10,000. Dorsey didn't directly address the Re/Code report that cited unnamed people, but he made it clear that Twitter isn't wedded to the 140-character limit. He made his point by posting a screenshot of a text consisting of 1,325 characters. Twitter declined to comment on its plans. Whatever Twitter does next, Dorsey pledged most tweets will remain "short and sweet."

Latvian who co-wrote worldwide computer virus can go home

NEW YORK (AP)—A Latvian computer code writer who admitted a role in spreading a virus to more than a million computers worldwide, including some at NASA, can return home after serving 20 months in prison. Deniss Calovskis, 30, was sentenced Tuesday to time served. Calovskis, who pleaded guilty last summer to conspiring to commit computer intrusion, was not immediately freed because his extradition to the United States to face charges means he must be returned by authorities to Latvia. U.S. District Judge Kimba Wood in Manhattan said she was impressed by his rehabilitation and wanted to ensure he was credited for more than 10 months he spent in a Latvian prison before he was sent to the United States.

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$9.95
Northwest Territory Deluxe Arm Chair

$26.95
Level Loop Area Rug 54" x 84" (5'x7')

$89.95
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$27.95
Igloo Seat Top 5 Gallon Beverage Dispenser

$27.95
Coleman 48qt 63 Cans Cooler

$9.95
Essential Home 18 Gallon Storage Tote

Essential Home 6qt Storage Container $2.95

Essential Home 20 Gallon Lock Tote $12.95

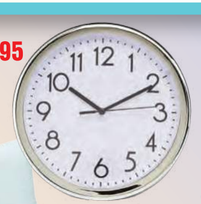
Essential Home Bath Towels $5.95

Hefty 66qt Storage Solution $14.95

$14.95
Home Logic 2.0 Bushel White Lamper

Sharp 8.5 Wall Decor $5.95

TGF Jumbo Pillow $6.95



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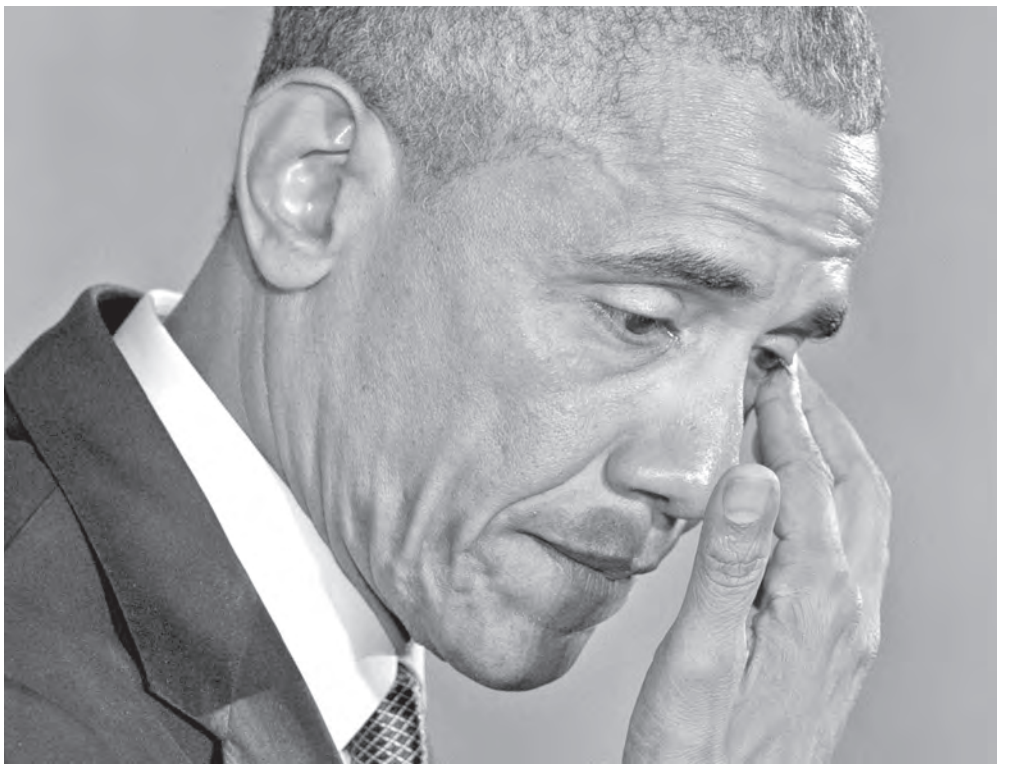
Nation

‘It gets me mad’—Obama acts alone on gun control

WASHINGTON (AP)—Tears streaking his cheeks, President Barack Obama launched a final-year push Tuesday to tighten sales of firearms in the U.S., using his presidential powers in the absence of tougher gun restrictions that Congress has refused to pass.

The president struck a combative tone as he came out with plans for expanded background checks and other modest measures that have drawn consternation from gun rights groups, which Obama accused of making Congress their hostage. Palpable, too, was Obama’s extreme frustration at having made such little progress on gun control since the slaughter of 20 first-graders in Connecticut confronted the nation more than three years ago.

“First-graders,” Obama said woefully, resting his chin on his hand and wiping away tears as he recalled the 2012 massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School. “Every time I think about those kids, it gets me mad.”



AP

An emotional President Barack Obama pauses to wipe away tears as he recalled the 20 first-graders killed in 2012 at Sandy Hook Elementary School, while speaking in the East Room of the White House in Washington, Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2016, about steps his administration is taking to reduce gun violence.

Obama’s 10-point plan to keep guns from those who shouldn’t have them marked a concession by the president: He’ll leave office without securing the new gun control laws he’s repeatedly and desperately implored Congress to pass.

Although Obama, acting alone, can take action around the margins, only Congress can enact more sweeping changes that gun control advocates say are the only way to truly stem a scourge of mass shootings.

“It won’t happen overnight,” Obama said. “It won’t happen during this Congress. It won’t happen during my presidency.” But, he added optimistically, “a lot of things don’t happen overnight.”

The centerpiece of Obama’s plan is an attempt to narrow the loophole that exempts gun sales from background checks if the seller isn’t a federal registered dealer. With new federal “guidance,” the administration is clarifying that even those who sell just a few weapons at gun shows, flea markets or online can be deemed dealers and required to conduct checks on prospective buyers.

Whether that step can make a significant dent in unregulated gun sales is an open question, and one not easily answered.

Millions of guns are sold annually in informal settings outside of gun shops, including many through private sales arranged online. But the Obama administration acknowledged it couldn’t quantify how many gun sales would be newly subjected to background checks, nor how many currently unregistered gun sellers would have to obtain a license.

Easily reversible by a future president, the government’s guidance to gun sellers lacks the legal oomph of a new law, such as the one Obama and likeminded lawmakers tried but failed to pass in 2013. The Justice Department said online the guidance “has no regulatory effect and is not intended to create or confer any rights, privileges, or benefits in any matter, case, or proceeding.”

What’s more, none of the steps would have probably prevented any of the recent mass shootings that Obama invoked in the East Room: Aurora, Oak Creek, Charleston, Newtown, to name some. But Obama defiantly rejected that critique, dismissing it as the tired trope of gun lobbyists who question “why bother trying?”

Leader of armed group wants land transfer, then will go home

BURNS, Ore. (AP)—A leader of the small, armed group that is occupying a remote national wildlife preserve in Oregon said Tuesday they will go home when a plan is in place to turn over management of federal lands to locals.

Ammon Bundy told reporters at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge that ranchers, loggers and farmers should have control of federal land—a common refrain in a decades-long fight over public lands in the West.

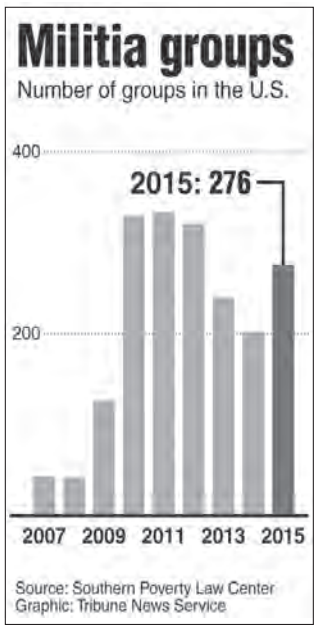
“It is our goal to get the logger back to logging, the rancher back to ranching,” said the son of Nevada rancher Cliven Bundy, who was involved in a high-profile 2014 standoff with the government over grazing rights.

The younger Bundy’s anti-government group is critical of federal land stewardship, but environmentalists and others say U.S. officials should keep control for the broadest possible benefit to business, recreation and the environment.

The armed activists seized the refuge’s headquarters Saturday night. Roughly 20 people bundled in camouflage, earmuffs and cowboy hats seem to be centered around a complex of buildings on the 300-square-mile high desert preserve.

As the takeover entered its third day, authorities had not moved in and had not shut off power to the refuge, Arizona rancher LaVoy Finicum said, adding that he was eager to go home and tend to his cattle.

“If they cut it off, that would be such a crying shame. All the pipes would freeze,” he said.



A pickup truck blocked the entrance to the preserve earlier Tuesday, and a man looked out over the snowy grounds from a watchtower.

Ammon Bundy offered few specifics about the group’s plan to get the land turned over to local control, but Finicum said the activists would examine the underlying land ownership transactions to begin to “unwind it.”

The federal government controls about half of all land in the West, which would make the wholesale transfer of ownership extremely difficult and expensive.

For example, it owns 53 percent of Oregon, 85 percent of Nevada and 66 percent of Utah, according to the Congressional Research Service. Taking over federal public lands in Idaho could cost the state $111 million a year, according to a University of Idaho study.

Snyder declares emergency in Flint over water problems

DETROIT (AP)—Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder declared a state of emergency in Flint on Tuesday over problems with lead in the city’s drinking water, the same day federal officials confirmed they’re investigating the matter that prompted a local public health emergency.

Snyder’s action follows emergency declarations by the city and Genesee County, which requested help from the state. Michigan’s declaration makes available state resources in cooperation with local response and recovery operations.

U.S. attorney’s spokeswoman Gina Balaya said in an email that the federal investigation is “an effort to address the concerns of Flint residents,” but she couldn’t say whether it is a criminal or civil investigation.

The city switched from Detroit’s water system to Flint River water in a cost-cutting move in 2014, while under state financial management. That was intended as a temporary step while a pipeline was built from Lake Huron.

Residents complained about the water’s taste, smell and appearance, and children were found to have elevated levels of lead due to the water supply. Exposure to lead can cause behavior problems and learning disabilities in children.

The city returned to Detroit water in October.

Officials say the state will use its own resources during the emergency, but Snyder could request federal help if Michigan is unable to handle demands.

Last week, Snyder apologized and Michigan’s top environmental regulator resigned after a task force created by Snyder blamed problems on his agency. Administration officials have pledged to cooperate fully with any federal requests.

Flint Mayor Karen Weaver welcomed the governor’s declaration, saying it’s what “Flint deserves.”

The state initially downplayed lead concerns but ultimately had to commit $10.6 million to reconnect Flint to Detroit and to respond with filters, testing and other services.

Ex-prep school students call for sex abuse investigation

BOSTON (AP)—Two former students of a prestigious Rhode Island boarding school spoke haltingly or cried Tuesday as they detailed being sexually abused as teenagers by an ex-athletic trainer. A third former student said he was raped with a broomstick by another pupil and described how his assault was so well-known on campus that there was a joking reference to it in the yearbook.

The three former students, who spoke at a Boston news conference, are among dozens who allege they were sexually abused at St. George’s School in Middletown, where tuition costs $56,000 a year. Lawyers who represent them said they have heard from 40 people who have reported being molested or raped by former school staffers and students, most during the 1970s and 1980s but some as recently as 2004.

The former students called on the school to commission an independent investigation of the allegations and to set up a fund to help pay for therapy for the victims.

In a prepared statement, the school apologized “for the harm done to alumni by former employees and former students of the school.”

“We also apologize that the way in which the school addressed these incidents has served to compound this harm,” the statement said.

The school said it has authorized reimbursement for counseling for victims.

“We recognize the long-lasting impact of sexual abuse and are dedicated to working with survivors to aid them in healing from its painful aftermath,” the school said.

Last month, the school said its investigation found that 26 students were sexually abused by six school employees in the 1970s and ‘80s. It acknowledged it didn’t report abusers to authorities at the time and apologized for not doing more.

But the accusers say they are not satisfied with the school’s investigation, particularly since it was conducted by the law partner of the school’s attorney.

Anne Scott and Katie Wales Lovkay, who attended St. George’s in the late 1970s, described being led through the boys locker room into a training room by the school’s now-deceased athletic trainer. Scott said she was repeatedly raped by the trainer over a two-year period, beginning when she was 15. The trainer was 67.

Asia

N. Korea says it conducts successful powerful H-bomb test

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea said Wednesday it had conducted a powerful hydrogen bomb test, a defiant and surprising move that, if confirmed, would be a huge jump in Pyongyang's quest to improve its still-limited nuclear arsenal.

A television anchor said in a typically propaganda-heavy statement that the North had tested a "miniaturized" hydrogen bomb, elevating the country's "nuclear might to the next level" and providing it with a weapon to defend against the United States and its other enemies.

The statement said the test was a "perfect success." South Korea's Defense Ministry said, without elaborating, that it was bolstering its security posture in response.

There has long been skepticism by Washington and nuclear experts on past North Korean claims about H-bombs, which are much more powerful, and much more difficult to make, than atomic bombs. But a confirmed test would be seen as extremely worrying and lead to a strong push for new, tougher sanctions on North Korea at the United Nations. It would also further worsen already abysmal relations between Pyongyang and its neighbors.

North Korean nuclear tests are worrying because each new blast is seen as pushing North Korea's scientists and engineers closer to their goal of building a bomb small enough to place on a missile that can reach the U.S. mainland.

A successful H-bomb test would be a big step for the North. In a hydrogen bomb, radiation from a nuclear fission explosion sets off a fusion reaction responsible for a powerful blast and radioactivity.

Writing in December, after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un bragged of H-bomb capabilities, nuclear expert Jeffrey Lewis noted that building such a bomb "would seem to be a bit of a stretch for the North Koreans."

"Thermonuclear weapons are tricky; making one work requires a bit of test experience," he wrote on the North Korea-focused 38 North website. But, he added, "The North has now had a nuclear weapons program for more than 20 years. This program has yielded three nuclear tests. North Korean nuclear scientists have access to their counterparts in Pakistan, possibly Iran and maybe a few other places. We should not expect that they will test the same fission device over and over again."

AP

In this Oct. 10, 2015, file photo, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un gestures as he watches a military parade in Pyongyang, North Korea. North Korea said on Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2016, it has conducted a hydrogen bomb test.

Crowds dressed in thick winter coats gathered outside a large video screen near a Pyongyang train station to cheer and take video and photos on their mobile phones as the state TV anchor, dressed in a pink traditional Korean hanbok, delivered the statement.

North Korea is thought to have a handful of rudimentary nuclear bombs and has spent decades trying to perfect a multistage, long-range missile to eventually carry smaller versions of those bombs. After several failures, it put its first satellite into space with a long-range rocket launched in December 2012.

Experts say that ballistic missiles and rockets in satellite launches share similar bodies, engines and other technology. The U.N. called the 2012 launch a banned test of ballistic missile technology.

Some analysts say the North hasn't likely achieved the technology needed to manufacture a miniaturized warhead that could fit on a long-range missile capable of hitting the U.S. But there is a growing debate on just how far the North has advanced in its secretive nuclear and missile programs.

In the first indication of a possible test, the U.S. Geological Survey measured an earthquake Wednesday morning with a magnitude of 5.1. An official from the Korea Metrological Administration, South Korea's weather agency, said the agency believed the earthquake was caused artificially, based on an analysis of the seismic waves and because it originated 49 kilometers (30 miles) north of Kilju, the northeastern area where North Korea's main nuclear test site is located. The country conducted all three previous atomic detonations there.

The test is a surprise, both in its purported type and its timing.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Nearly 2,000 left homeless by quake in India's northeast

GAUHATI, India (AP)—Authorities are offering financial help to rebuild damaged homes of nearly 2,000 people after a strong earthquake that struck India's remote northeast along the border with Myanmar early Monday. L. M. Khaute, the Manipur state police chief, says at least eight people were killed and more than 100 injured by falling debris when the 6.7 magnitude earthquake struck the state. Residents said Tuesday they have moved temporarily to the homes of their relatives and friends while state government officials assessed damage to their homes in Imphal, the state capital, the Tamenglong district that was the quake epicenter, and two other districts. Khaute said rescuers have not found anyone trapped in debris.

Thai police say French tourist dead after boat hits her

BANGKOK (AP)—Police in the southern Thai resort province of Krabi say a French woman has died after her head was struck by a boat while snorkeling. Lt. Col. Anurak Parinyasatirkul of the Marine Police said the 52-year-old woman was hit Tuesday afternoon while snorkeling with her family, but no one else was injured. He said police believe she died from a head wound that might have come from a sharp object such as a propeller. Anurak said police traced the boat, which had a crew of Myanmar nationals, to further up the Andaman coast in Phuket. The boat's owners arranged to have the captain surrender, and he told them he was unaware of hitting the woman.

Malaysia Airlines bans check-in baggage to Paris, Amsterdam

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP)—Malaysia Airlines has barred passengers from checking in baggage on flights to Paris and Amsterdam for two days due to "unseasonably strong headwinds" on a longer flight path it is taking. The move affecting Tuesday and Wednesday flights has baffled passengers, who slammed the airline on social media. The airline says it operates a long route to Europe via Egyptian airspace for safety reasons. It says the longer flight path consumes more fuel and this, "combined with "temporary unseasonably strong headwinds, is limiting the airlines' ability to carry baggage in cargo." It said on its Facebook page that passengers on economy class can only carry a cabin bag up to 7 kilograms (15.4 pounds) while those in business and first class are allowed two pieces totaling 14 kilograms (30.8 pounds).

India says all 6 militants killed in air base siege

PATHANKOT, India (AP)—Indian forces have killed the last of the six militants who attacked an air force base near the Pakistan border over the weekend, the defense minister said Tuesday, though soldiers were still searching the base as a precaution.

Manohar Parrikar stopped short of saying the operation had ended, but Indian officials have said repeatedly that only six gunmen were involved.

Parrikar did not explain how just a handful of gunmen managed to paralyze a large Indian air base for almost four days, insisting that security forces had done "a commendable job." Seven Indian soldiers were killed during the attack.

"I see some gaps (in intelligence) but we will be able to understand only after the investigation. But I don't think we compromised on security," he told reporters after touring the scene of the fighting. He noted that the base is large, and is wooded in some places, making it difficult to pin down the gunmen.

Indian officials had been warned beforehand that an attack could be imminent at the Pathankot base, and had flown commandoes there in case of trouble. The warning came after the gunmen kidnapped an off-duty policeman near the base two days before the attack began, apparently to steal his vehicle. The policeman was freed the next day, and warned security forces that a team of heavily armed militants was in the region.

Parrikar said the militants' weapons included AK-47 assault rifles with makeshift rocket launchers attached, mortar rounds that could be fired from the launchers, pistols, and 50-60 kilograms (110-130 pounds) of ammunition.

In the first known claim of responsibility, the United Jehad Council, an alliance of 13 Kashmir-based rebel groups, claimed that its "highway squad," which normally attacks military convoys, carried out the attack.

Alliance spokesman Syed Sadaqat Hussain said in a statement to Current News Service, which is based in the Indian portion of Kashmir, that the attack was a message to India that its security forces were not beyond the militants' reach.

Mystery of missing men in Hong Kong takes a twist

HONG KONG (AP)—Five men associated with a Hong Kong publisher known for books critical of China's leaders have vanished one by one in the last three months, alarming activists and deepening suspicions that mainland authorities are squeezing free expression in the enclave.

The mystery took another turn Tuesday when the wife of the latest man to disappear said she now believes he went to China voluntarily and has canceled a missing person's report for him.

Lee Bo, a British citizen who vanished Dec. 30, purportedly wrote to say he went to mainland China to help with an investigation. His case has sparked fears that he was seized in Hong Kong by security agents from the mainland and taken there in violation of an agreement giving Hong Kong a high degree of control over its own affairs.

Lee's wife said she believed the letter showed he wasn't acting under pressure.

"I believe that it was voluntarily written, so that's why I retracted the case," Choi Ka-ping told reporters in brief comments.

Lee and the other four missing men are associated with the publisher Mighty Current, which specializes in gossipy books on political scandals involving China's Communist leaders and other sensitive topics that are banned in the mainland.

The disappearance of the five—all since October—has raised concerns Beijing is eroding the "one country, two systems" principle that's been in place since Britain ceded control of Hong Kong to China in 1997. The principle maintains civil liberties in Hong Kong that are nonexistent on the mainland, including freedom of the press.

British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond, on a visit to Beijing, said he pressed officials for information on Lee.

"We have urgently enquired, both of the Hong Kong authorities and of the mainland Chinese authorities, what—if anything—they know of his whereabouts," Hammond said. He added that if Lee is involved in any investigation, it should be settled by the Hong Kong judicial system.

World

Iraq must walk a fine line amid Iranian, Saudi tensions

BAGHDAD (AP)—While many Iraqi Shiites took to the streets in outrage over Saudi Arabia's execution of a prominent Shiite cleric, the country's prime minister has had to walk a more cautious line, trying to contain Iraq's own explosive sectarian tensions.

The execution of Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr has inflamed the sectarian divide across the region. Shiite-led Iran has been the most vocal in its condemnation, and protesters stormed Saudi diplomatic missions in Iran over the weekend. That prompted Sunni-led Saudi Arabia to cut diplomatic relations with Iran, and the kingdom's allies have lined up behind it, either cutting or reducing their ties with Tehran.

The government of Iraq, however, is straining to keep the peace amid the regional tumult. Iran is a key ally of the Shiite-led government in Baghdad, has helped it in the fight against the Islamic State group, and supports powerful Shiite militias in the country.

At the same time, as the fight against IS extremists enters its second year, Iraq is grappling with the worst political and security crises since the withdrawal of U.S. troops in 2011. Only last week, Saudi Arabia sent an ambassador to Baghdad for the first time in 25 years to try to improve its relationship with Iraq.

In Washington, Brett McGurk, special presidential envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, said U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry spent most of Monday on the phone trying to ease tensions in the region.

"We are encouraging a de-escalation, because any time you have regional polarization, regional escalation, it obviously can cause difficulties and it opens up seams for extremists on all sides to take advantage of the situation," McGurk told reporters Tuesday.

In a sign of the Iraqi government's caution, Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi issued a statement expressing regret over al-Nimr's execution and warning that such actions would "bring more destruction and devastation."

His office followed that Tuesday with a call for unity among Iraqis. Regional tensions should be faced "wisely, responsibly and rationally in order to preserve the security and stability of Iraq," according to a statement from al-Abadi's office.

A day earlier, thousands of Shiites gathered a few hundred meters (yards) from his office and called for the government to sever diplomatic ties with Riyadh. The protesters, supporters of prominent Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, chanted that al-Nimr's blood had not been spilled in vain and that the Mahdi Army, Sadr's disbanded Shiite militia, would avenge his death if needed.

Palestinian families push Israel to return attackers' bodies

JERUSALEM (AP)—Palestinian accountant Ahmed Oweisat last saw his son Moataz in October—hours before Israeli police say the 16-year-old boy tried to stab an officer and was fatally shot in Jerusalem.

The son still has not been buried—one of about a dozen bodies of Palestinian suspected attackers that Israel continues to hold nearly four months after a wave of violence erupted in Jerusalem and spread across Israel and the West Bank.

Israel says it is holding the bodies due to security concerns, but Palestinians say the measure is stoking anger and worsening the atmosphere. Islam, like Judaism, requires swift burial of the dead.

"Every time I sit next to the heater and I feel warm, I imagine my son in the refrigerator," said Oweisat, toasting his hands over an electric heater in a drafty home in east Jerusalem.

The current round of fighting broke out in mid-September, fueled by rumors that Israel was plotting to take over a sensitive Jerusalem site that is holy to Jews and Muslims. Israel has said there are no plans to change the sensitive arrangements at the hilltop compound, revered by Jews as the location of the biblical Temples and which today houses the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Since then, 21 Israelis have been killed in Palestinian attacks, mostly stabbings, shootings and car rammings, while at least 132 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire, including 91 said by Israel to be attackers.

New Year assaults spark fresh migration debate in Germany

BERLIN (AP)—A string of sex assaults and robberies during New Year's celebrations in Germany has fuelled debate about the country's ability to integrate large numbers of migrants, after police said that men who targeted dozens of women in the western city of Cologne appeared to be of "Arab or North African origin."

Political leaders including Chancellor Angela Merkel condemned the attacks, though many also warned against hasty conclusions about the perpetrators. But to some Germans already uneasy about the one million asylum-seekers their country took in last year the incident seemed to confirm simmering fears.

"Is this the 'cosmopolitan and colorful' Germany that Merkel wished for?" asked Frauke Petry, leader of the nationalist party Alternative for Germany.

Petry's party, known by its German acronym AfD, has called for a clampdown on the number of asylum-seekers allowed into the country, a sentiment shared among a growing number of supporters in Merkel's own center-right bloc.

"It's unacceptable that women are sexually molested and robbed by young migrants on the streets and public squares of German cities at night," said Andreas Scheuer, general secretary of the Christian Social Union, the Bavarian wing of Merkel's party.

IN CELEBRATION OF HIS NEW LIFE

†Vicente Castaños Aizon

July 27, 1938 - December 27, 2015

His memories will forever live in the hearts of his:

Wife: Heriberta A. Aizon
Son: Roland A. Aizon
Daughter in Law: Pauline C. Aizon
Granddaughter: Katielyn L. C. Aizon
Grandson: Nathan A. C. Aizon

Funeral services will be held on Friday, January 08, 2015.

His remains will lie in state at Nuestra Senora dela Paz Memorial Chapel – Cabrera's Funeral Home, Beach Road, Garapan from 7:30am to 9:30am. His remains will be escorted from Nuestra Senora dela Paz Memorial Chapel at 10:00am to Kristo Rai Church, Garapan.

Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10:30am. Interment Service will take place at "Hatdin Familia" Sanctuario PAX Memorial Gardens, Kagman, Saipan, where he will be at a peaceful rest.

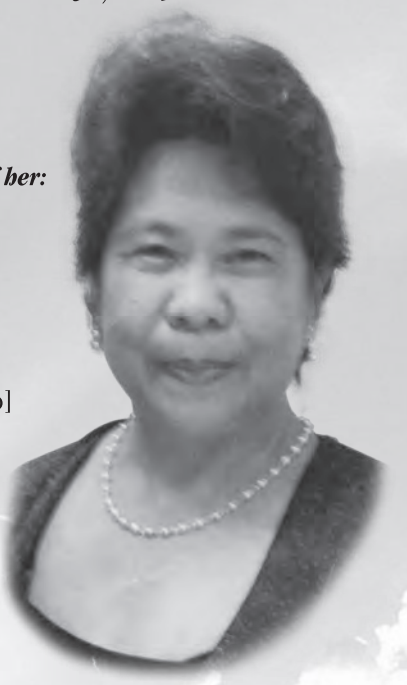
Thank you
Maraming Salamat Po
Si Yu'us Ma'ase

Heriberta A. Aizon
Roland A. and Pauline C. Aizon
and grandchildren

In Celebration of Her New Life

†Emelita Garong Bacani

February 16, 1954 –December 31, 2015



In Her New life, She now joins her:
Father: †Remegio Bacani
Mother: †Eufracina G. Bacani
Brother In-Law: †Juan T. Cabrera

Her memories will forever live in the hearts of her:
Brother/Sisters and In-Laws:
Alfredo & Nenita Bacani and Family
†**Bernabe** & Raquel Bacani
†**Camilo** & Remy Bacani and Family
Dolly & Nick Muna
Michelle Cabrera [†Mikayla]
Elaine Cabrera & Luis John Castro
[Damian, Gaige, Kozmy, Reianah & Kymo]
Jason & Macu Cabrera [Jayden & Cecilia]
Nicholas Jr. & Valerie Muna [Aliana]
Raymond Muna
Nicole Muna
Flordeliza Bacani [Jeffrey Bacani]

She will also be missed by her numerous aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, cousins, relatives and friends.

Daily Mass of Intentions are being celebrated at Mt. Carmel Cathedral at 6:00am.

Funeral Services will be held on Friday, January 08, 2016. Her remains will be escorted from Nuestra Senora dela Paz Memorial Chapel at 8:30 am to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Cathedral. Responso Service will be at 9:00 am followed by Holy Rosary at 9:15 am.

Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:00 am, followed by Interment service at Chalan Kanoa Cemetery .

Please join us in prayers.

Thank you – Si Yu'us Maase – Maraming Salamat Po

The Family

Environment

Record-tying El Nino's storms are hitting parched California

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Forced by drought to become miserly with water, Californians were warned against reverting to old habits Tuesday as the first of several storms spawned by a record-tying El Nino began drenching the state.

A series of storms lining up over the Pacific Ocean was welcome news in parched California, despite their potential for causing flash floods and mudslides.

But authorities cautioned that even the wettest of winters can't replenish depleted reservoirs and aquifers unless everyone keeps pitching in.

California's water deficit is so deep after four years of drought that a "steady parade of storms" like these will be needed for years to come, said Mike Anderson, climatologist for the state's Department of Water Resources.

"We're at least on a good trajectory," he said. "We've got to keep it going."

The current El Nino—a natural warming of the central Pacific Ocean that interacts with the atmosphere and changes weather worldwide—has tied 1997-1998 as the strongest on record, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Climate Prediction Center said, citing statistics that go back to 1950.

El Ninos usually bring heavy rains to California, although it remains to be seen whether people should expect anything like a repeat of 1997 and 1998, when storms killed 17 people, wiped out crops, washed out highways and pushed houses down hillsides.

"DarthNino may finally have California in its sights," said Jeff Masters, meteorology director of the private Weather Underground.

"A parade of strong Pacific storms characteristic of a strong El Nino event will batter the state this week and will likely bring damaging flooding by the time the second storm in the series rolls through on Wednesday," Masters said.

However, Masters and meteorologist Ryan Maue of the private WeatherBell Analytics don't believe this first storm is as powerful as some other Pacific storm systems, and they caution that the storms now following it may land elsewhere.

The current forecast calls for a "kind of a nice level of bombardment" over the next two weeks—probably not enough to cause the tremendous flooding of 1998, but then again, that year's floods didn't peak until February, Masters said.

As much as 15 inches of rain could fall in the next 16 days in Northern California, with about 2 feet of snow expected in the highest points of the Sierra Nevada, said Johnny Powell, a forecaster with the National Weather Service.

In Southern California, between 2 and 3.5 inches of rain is predicted to fall across the coastal and valley areas, and up to 5 inches falling in the mountains.

The first in the line of storms also drenched the desert Southwest on Tuesday and was aiming for the Gulf Coast, but should weaken to no more than a couple inches of rainfall by the time it reaches the Southeast, Masters added.

Flash flooding and flows of mud and debris were a concern, especially in places left barren by last year's wildfires. Residents of the Silverado Canyon burn area in Orange County and the Solimar burn area in Ventura County were urged to consider evacuating.

"The best time to prepare is before a weather event happens, but there is still time to prepare at least a basic emergency kit for your home, your car or your place of work," said Brad Alexander, spokesman for the Governor's Office of Emergency Services.

In Orange County, south of Los Angeles, a homeless man in his 40s was swept off his feet by swift waters and washed nearly a mile down Brea Creek in Buena Park before he pulled himself out, county fire Capt. Steve Concialdi said. He was treated at a hospital for scraped feet and arms.

Rocks fell on the roadway through Malibu Canyon, damaging four vehicles and clogging a heavily traveled commuter route through the steep Santa Monica Mountains, and Los Angeles police were rousting the homeless from normally dry riverbeds.

As steady and sometimes heavy rains fell, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti urged people to clear gutters and anything in their yards that might clog storm drains, and to stockpile sandbags if their home is susceptible to flooding.

Garcetti also said that the city's homeless encampments have been mapped for the first time, and he promised shuttles to bring people to shelters with 6,000 beds.

AP

Authorities investigate a multi-vehicle crash involving a semi-truck in the westbound lane of Foothill 210 Freeway at Sierra Madre Blvd., Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2016, in Pasadena, Calif.

Forever In Our Hearts

†Vicente Taitingfong Camacho

Lovingly known as "Ben"

April 05, 1929 – January 02, 2016
Was called to his eternal rest at the age of 86

In His New Life He Now Joins His

Father: Jose Tudela Camacho
Mother: Juana Taitingfong Camacho
Brothers: Isidoro (Twin Brother), Leon and Antonio Taitingfong Camacho
Sisters: Olivia and Isabel Taitingfong Camacho
Father-in-law: Antonio Villagomez Duenas
Mother-in-law: Rosa Reyes Duenas
Brothers-in-law: Jesus R. Duenas and Joaquin C. Cabrera
Sisters-in-law: Maria B. Camacho, Visitacion M. Camacho, Rita H. Sablan and Mariana D. San Nicolas

His Memories Will Forever Live in the Hearts of His

Wife: **Rita Duenas Camacho**
Children, Grandchildren and Great Grandchildren:
Lillian Edita D. Camacho
Mae Marie *V. and Paul A. Guerrero*
(Hope Juliana, Matthew Vincent and Mia Remae)
Mark David *C. Villagomez and Marie J. Attao*
(Lilliana Terie and Tyson Levi)
Norbert D. and Elisa SN. Camacho
Norisa Nikita *SN. Camacho*
Julie Marie C. and Hiram A. Castro
Vincent Frank *C. Dela Cruz and Celeste P. Quitano (Serenity Irene and Vincent Frank, Jr.)*
Hiralynn Mara *P. Castro and BJ Seman*
Anthony Joe *C. Dela Cruz and Sovarry Hong (Kaiden Rithesan and Kailee Juliana)*
Brothers: **Luis** T. and Tomasa C. Camacho and Children
Juan T. and Maria B. Camacho and Children

Brothers-in-law and Sisters-in-law:
Margaret R. Duenas and Son
Maria D. Cabrera and Children
Ricardo R. and Auria Duenas and Children
Juan R. Duenas and Son
Juan M. San Nicolas and Children

He is also survived by numerous Cousins, Nieces and Nephews.

Mass of Intentions is offered daily at 6:00AM at the Mount Carmel Cathedral.
Holy Rosary is being said nightly at 7:00PM at the Cathedral.

Funeral Service will be on Monday, January 11, 2016. His body will leave the CHCC Morgue at 7:30AM and will be escorted to the Mount Carmel Cathedral for viewing and last respects. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:00AM followed immediately by Interment Service at the Chalan Kanoa Cemetery.

Your thoughts and prayers are greatly appreciated.

Un Dankulu na Si Yu'us Ma'ase.

Ginen I Familia

Life & Style

Supermodel Rachel Hunter feels pressure to keep up looks

PASADENA, Calif. (AP)—A roundup of news Tuesday from the Television Critics Association winter meeting, at which TV networks and streaming services are presenting details on upcoming programs:

Even supermodels feel pressure to keep up their looks.

Rachel Hunter confesses she has considered plastic surgery after feeling "horrified" seeing photos of herself. The 46-year-old former Sports Illustrated swimsuit cover model took to wearing scarves to hide her jowls.

"In real life I was fairly happy with myself. In photos I was horrified," she said. "People were like, 'Why don't you get rid of those deep lines (around her mouth)?'"

Hunter, who has two grown children with ex-husband Rod Stewart, changed her opinion once she began working on her new Ovation series "Rachel Hunter's Tour of Beauty." The 13-episode show debuting Jan. 17 takes viewers around the globe to discover indigenous beauty secrets and how beauty is defined in different cultures.

"After going on this journey and seeing other cultures away went that superficial idea of beauty," she said. "Ideas of beauty are old and need to be shattered. We have no self-acceptance. If we don't enjoy who we are then how can you offer fully any sense of beauty or well-being or longevity?"

ANOTHER RUN FOR O.J.

The O.J. Simpson saga is getting another treatment, this time on ESPN.

"O.J.: Made in America" will air over five nights sometime next spring under the sports cable network's "30 for 30" documentary banner.

Director Ezra Edelman tried to interview Simpson, who is serving time in a Nevada prison for robbery, but the football star acquitted for murdering his ex-wife and her friend refused. Edelman did persuade such key players as former prosecutor Marcia Clark, district attorney Gil Garcetti and Los Angeles policeman Mark Fuhrman to participate.

"Most people were reluctant to talk," Edelman said. "We really had to convince her (Clark) through the fact that we did know what we were talking about, we don't have an agenda. I'm just trying to get the story right."

Edelman, the Emmy-winning son of children's activist Marian Wright Edelman, explores the intersection of race and celebrity in America through the prism of Simpson's life against the backdrop of the Watts riots and Rodney King verdict in Los Angeles.

AP

Rachel Hunter speaks onstage during the "Rachel Hunter's Tour of Beauty" panel at the Ovation 2016 Winter TCA on Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2016, in Pasadena, Calif.

PLUGGING AWAY

Ed Asner is still acting up a storm at age 86.

His latest role is in "Love Finds You in Valentine," airing Feb. 14 on the Up network.

Asner stays busy with acting and voiceover work and recently rejected the idea of retiring. He uses a cane to steady himself.

"I was thinking about it this Christmas but the new year looks very promising so I'll forget about retiring," he said. "I would like to die in the saddle and be like Dick Shawn and die on stage."

Shawn had a heart attack and died while performing a play in 1987.

Asner recalled the lesson his father learned from firefighters in their Kansas City neighborhood.

"They retired and a year later they were dead," he said.

Asner's father died at 82 still running his junk business.

DA BEARS

Vince Vaughn is indulging his childhood love of the Chicago Bears with a new ESPN movie on the 1985 Super Bowl champs.

The 45-year-old actor, who grew up in suburban Chicago, serves as executive producer of "The '85 Bears," airing Feb. 4 as part of the network's "30 for 30" documentary series.

Vaughn was especially fond of star running back Walter Payton.

"You couldn't ask for a better sports figure to look up to as a child. He was beloved," Vaughn said. "The Bears are very Chicago. There was something very unfiltered about these guys. It seemed like they had a lot of fun. Catching up with them now, it's fascinating to see those big personalities and everything they went through."

The film includes a rare appearance by Buddy Ryan, the former assistant to coach Mike Ditka. Now 81, Ryan is in failing health and is visited by some of his former players.

ORIGINAL SUPERHERO

Lindsay Wagner has mixed emotions about the female superheroes populating movies and TV today.

She, of course, rose to fame as "The Bionic Woman," her Emmy-winning role from the mid-'70s.

"It's great that finally women are allowed to be heroes," she said. "But I also am concerned when I see a lot of the modern-day idea of a woman superhero is just yesterday's male hero in some tights."

Wagner's star-making turn as sci-fi action heroine Jamie Sommers was a spin-off of "The Six Million Dollar Man." Both characters were re-built after accidents with bionic implants.

"We're hopefully getting used to technology so we don't have to be mesmerized by it and get back to story," she said.

The 66-year-old actress co-stars with Ed Asner in "Love Finds You in Valentine," airing on the Up network.

'Spotlight,''Straight Outta Compton' among PGA nominees

LOS ANGELES (AP)—''Spotlight,'' ''Straight Outta Compton'' and "The Martian" were among the 10 feature film nominees announced Tuesday for the 27th Producers Guild Awards.

Conspicuously missing were critics favorite "Carol" and "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," a wild card thus far in award races.

The Producers Guild nominees reflected a diverse lot of films, including favorites such as the investigative journalism pic "Spotlight;" the star-studded financial crisis comedy "The Big Short;" and the high-octane "Mad Max: Fury Road."

More populist crowd-pleasers like Ridley Scott's space adventure "The Martian" and the N.W.A biopic "Straight Outta Compton" were also nominated, as was the revenge epic "The Revenant."

Surprises include a few well-reviewed films that were considered underdogs in the awards race—the border drama "Sicario," the artificial intelligence thriller "Ex Machina;" the Cold War thriller "Bridge of Spies;" and the immigrant romance "Brooklyn."

AP

This photo provided by Universal Pictures shows, Aldis Hodge, from left, Neil Brown, Jr. Jason Mitchell, O'Shea Jackson, Jr. and Corey Hawkins in a scene from the film, "Straight Outta Compton."

PGA nominees have historically been a solid indicator of films that ultimately received Academy Award nominations for best picture. Last year, "Birdman" won both the PGA and the Academy Award.

This year, Oscar front-runners seem more elusive than ever to determine, aside from a strong consensus around "Spotlight."

The voting period for Oscar nominees closes on Friday and the selections will be announced on Jan. 14. The Golden Globes will reveal its winners on Sunday.

Aside from "Star Wars" and "Carol," many other Oscar hopefuls were left out of the PGA lot. Among them were Lenny Abrahamson's "Room," which is expected to get star Brie Larson a best actress nomination; Quentin Tarantino's bloody Western "The Hateful Eight;" David O. Russell's miracle mop inventor pic "Joy;" and Ryan Coogler's continuation of the Rocky Balboa saga "Creed."

There were no surprises in the animation nominees, though, which included "Anomalisa," ''Inside Out," ''The Good Dinosaur," ''Minions" and "The Peanuts Movie."

Feature documentary nominees were previously announced and include "Amy" and "The Look of Silence."

The Producers Guild represents more than 7,000 producers of film, television and online content.

Winners will be announced on Jan. 23 during a ceremony in Los Angeles.

Original Boba Fett voice actor Jason Wingreen dies at 95

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Actor Jason Wingreen, who gave voice to Boba Fett in "The Empire Strikes Back" and played bartender Harry on TV's "All in the Family," has died. He was 95.

Wingreen's longtime manager and friend, James Harty, said Tuesday that Wingreen died of old age on Christmas Day at his home in Los Angeles.

Born in Brooklyn in 1920, Wingreen's acting career spanned five decades. Besides voicing the bounty hunter Boba Fett in the 1980 "Star Wars" sequel, Wingreen's credits include appearances on "Matlock," ''Seinfeld," ''Star Trek" and "Bonanza." He also appeared in three episodes of Rod Serling's "The Twilight Zone," playing the train conductor in "A Stop at Willoughby."

Wingreen is survived by his son, a sister and two grandchildren.

Woodley, Skarsgard join cast of HBO's 'Big Little Lies'

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Shailene Woodley and Alexander Skarsgard are part of a new HBO project, "Big Little Lies."

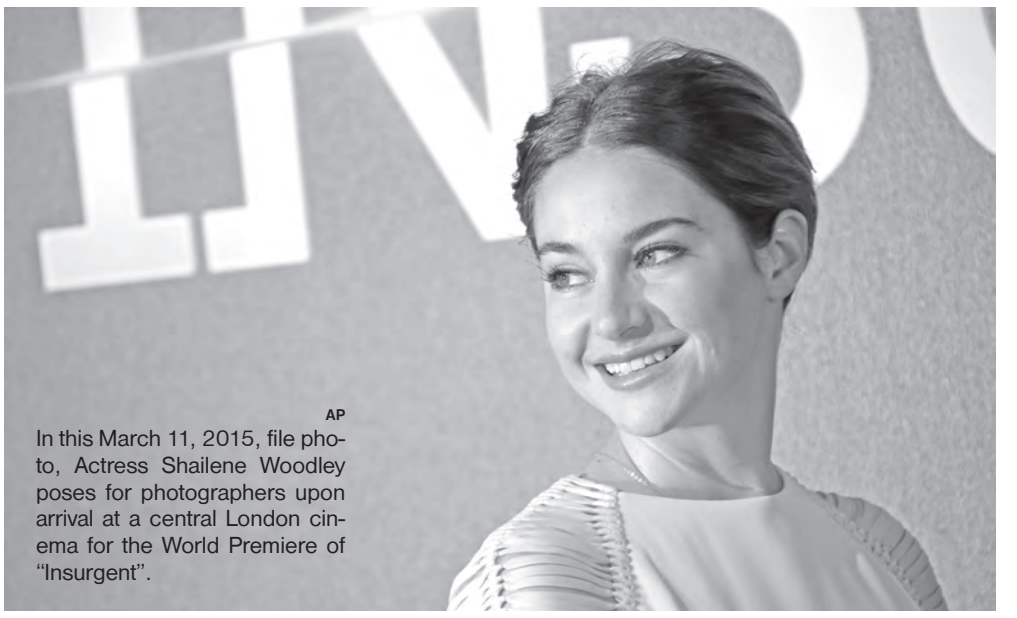
They join previously announced stars Reese Witherspoon and Nicole Kidman, who also are executive producers for the limited series.

HBO describes "Big Little Lies" as a darkly comedic drama about a trio of mothers with young children whose perfect lives fall apart and into murder.

Skarsgard will play Kidman's husband, HBO said Tuesday. Others in the cast include Laura Dern, Adam Scott, Zoë Kravitz and James Tupper.

David E. Kelley, whose credits include "Ally McBeal" and "Boston Legal," wrote the script and is an executive producer.

A premiere date for "Big Little Lies" was not announced.



AP

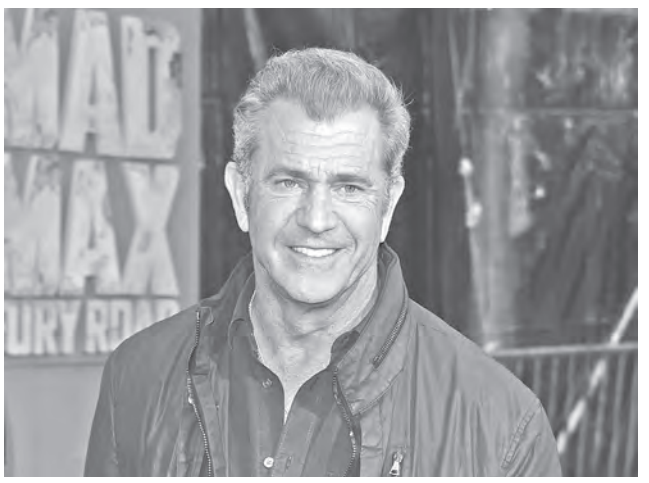
In this March 11, 2015, file photo, Actress Shailene Woodley poses for photographers upon arrival at a central London cinema for the World Premiere of "Insurgent".

Mel Gibson returns to Hollywood spotlight at Golden Globes

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Mel Gibson is returning to the Hollywood spotlight as a presenter at the Golden Globes.

Show producers announced Tuesday that the embattled star will appear at Sunday's ceremony at the Beverly Hilton Hotel. Gibson has kept a low profile for almost a decade, following an explosive drunken-driving arrest and public custody dispute.

Other presenters include Jim Carrey, Amy Adams, Helen Mirren, Kurt Russell, Jamie Foxx, Kate Hudson, Eddie Redmayne and Channing Tatum. Ricky Gervais is hosting the show, airing live on NBC.



AP

In this May 7, 2015 file photo, Mel Gibson arrives at the premiere of "Mad Max: Fury Road" in Los Angeles. Gibson will present at the Golden Globes ceremony at the Beverly Hilton Hotel on Sunday, Jan. 10, 2016.

Judge agrees to delay Camille Cosby's deposition in lawsuit

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. (AP)—A federal judge has agreed to postpone the deposition of Bill Cosby's wife in a Massachusetts lawsuit that accuses the comedian of defaming several women.

Camille Cosby had been scheduled to be deposed Wednesday by lawyers for the women who said Bill Cosby sexually assaulted them decades ago.

Last week, U.S. Magistrate Judge David Hennessey denied a motion by Camille Cosby's lawyers to throw out the subpoena.

She appealed and on Monday asked Hennessey to delay the deposition until the appeal is heard.

The judge agreed Tuesday to the postponement, saying it would be unfair to deny Camille Cosby her right to appeal. He says if the appeal is denied, the deposition should be rescheduled quickly.

Steely Dan founder Donald Fagen charged with assaulting wife

NEW YORK (AP)—Steely Dan founder Donald Fagen was charged Tuesday with assaulting his wife at their home, according to law enforcement officials and court papers.

The 67-year-old lead singer is accused of shoving Libby Titus into a marble window frame, knocking her to the ground, on Monday at their Manhattan apartment. The assault caused the 68-year-old Titus to "suffer bruising and swelling to her right arm, as well as substantial pain," a criminal complaint says.

The two officials were not authorized to disclose the victim's name and spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity.

Fagen was charged with misdemeanor assault and harassment. His publicist and his lawyer had no comment.

Fagen launched Steely Dan in 1972 with guitarist Walter Becker. The group went on to sell more than 40 million albums, with such hit singles as "Reelin' In the Years," ''Rikki Don't Lose that Number" and "Deacon Blues." The band was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2001. Becker and Fagen performed an eight-night residency at New York's Beacon Theatre in October with a newer iteration of the band.

Titus is a producer, actor and songwriter and put out two albums in the late 1970s with producers Phil Ramone, Paul Simon, Carly Simon and Robbie Robertson.

"I don't feel good," Titus told the New York Post. "I'm very tired, and I'm divorcing my husband."

Fagen was released without bail Tuesday after an arraignment. He was ordered to stay away from Titus.

Michael Weatherly leaving CBS drama 'NCIS' after 13 seasons

LOS ANGELES (AP)—''NCIS" star Michael Weatherly says he's leaving the long-running CBS drama.

Weatherly, who plays Special Agent Tony DiNozzo, has been with "NCIS" since it debuted in 2003.

In postings on his Twitter account Tuesday, Weatherly thanked the show's fans worldwide and said "NCIS" was a "fantastic ride." He called DiNozzo a wonderful character, one who was fun to play.

In a statement, CBS said Weatherly will leave "NCIS" at the end of this season. The network said it looked forward to working with Weatherly as part of its ongoing development deal with him.

Mark Harmon stars in the top-rated drama about Naval Criminal Investigative Service agents in Washington. The show is part of a popular franchise for CBS, with other "NCIS" series set in Los Angeles and New Orleans.

AP

In this May 19, 2014 file photo, Michael Weatherly arrives at CBS Television Studios Summer Soiree at The London Hotel, in Los Angeles.

Wife says stoppage time has run out for soccer enthusiast

DEAR ABBY: My husband, an avid soccer player, injured himself twice last year, which left him unable to work for months at a time. He refuses to hang up his cleats because he says it's his "one true passion." I think he's being selfish because his soccer injuries have caused a financial, emotional and physical strain on our family.

I can't be the only wife/mom who doesn't want the additional risk. Any advice on how to get through to him?

SPORTS WIFE IN CLEVELAND

DEAR SPORTS WIFE: I don't know how old your husband is, but two serious injuries in one year may be a hint from Father Time that his reflexes aren't as acute as they once were, and he should channel his passion in another direction. (Coaching, perhaps?)

Assuming you have insurance, contact your agent and ask if there is additional coverage your husband can take out in case he is seriously injured again. Of course, it won't guarantee that he won't hurt himself, but it might give you some peace of mind in case he does.

DEAR ABBY: I'm 23 and live with my parents—a situation I am working to change, to be sure. When I come home from work, I occasionally like to have a glass of wine or a beer. Obviously, because I'm an adult, this should not be a problem, but every time I touch alcohol my mom freaks out.

There is a history of alcoholism in my family, so I somewhat understand where she's coming from. But I feel she needs to realize that I can have a glass or two of wine and it doesn't mean I'm getting drunk or an alcoholic. I am my own person, in control of my body, and I know my limits.

My family's view of alcohol seems to have been skewed because of our history. Abby, one glass of wine a night does not an alcoholic make, right?

UNWINDING IN NEW ENGLAND

DEAR UNWINDING: Ordinarily, I would say no. But a tendency toward addiction can run in families, and for someone with a predisposition to alcoholism, a glass (or two) of wine every night could escalate and lead to problems.

Because you live in your mother's house, try to be more sensitive to her feelings and respect them. She has experienced firsthand what it's like to live with someone who has an alcohol problem, and it isn't pretty. That's why she is so sensitive about it.

DEAR ABBY: My neighbor often comes over to share some of her home cooking. Unfortunately, it tastes horrible. She invariably asks me the next day how I liked it, and I really don't enjoy lying. How can I tell her I don't like her cooking and I don't want her to bring me any more?

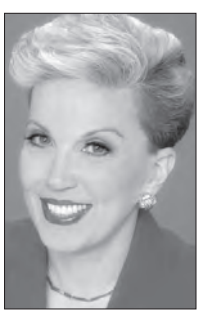
TENDER TUMMY IN WASHINGTON

DEAR TENDER TUMMY: Use a variation on your signature and say that although you appreciate her generosity, for some time her cooking hasn't agreed with you—you have a "tender tummy"—so please refrain from bringing over any more food.

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

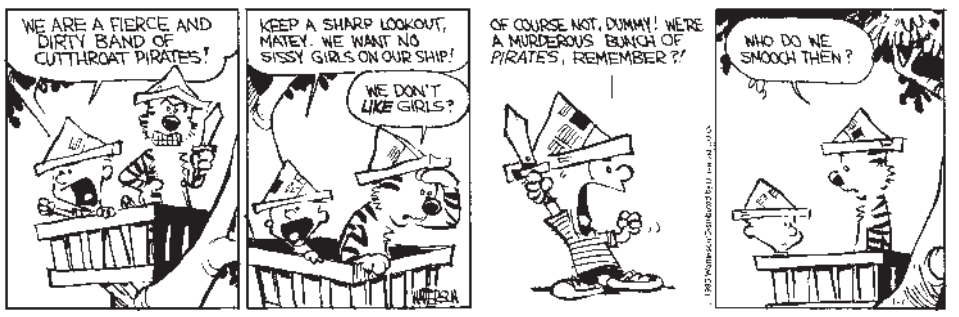


Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

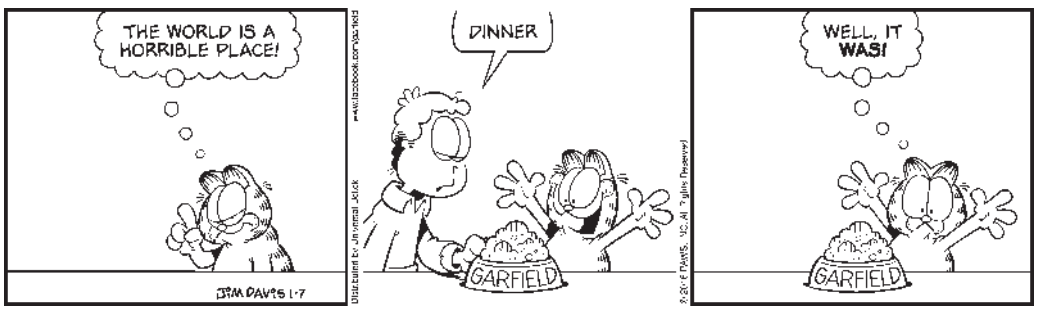
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


WE ARE A FIERCE AND DIRTY BAND OF CUTTHROAT PIRATES!
KEEP A SHARP LOOKOUT, MATEY. WE WANT NO SISSY GIRLS ON OUR SHIP!
WE DON'T LIKE GIRLS?
OF COURSE NOT, DUMMY! WE'RE A MURDEROUS BUNCH OF PIRATES, REMEMBER?!
WHO DO WE SNOOCH THEN?

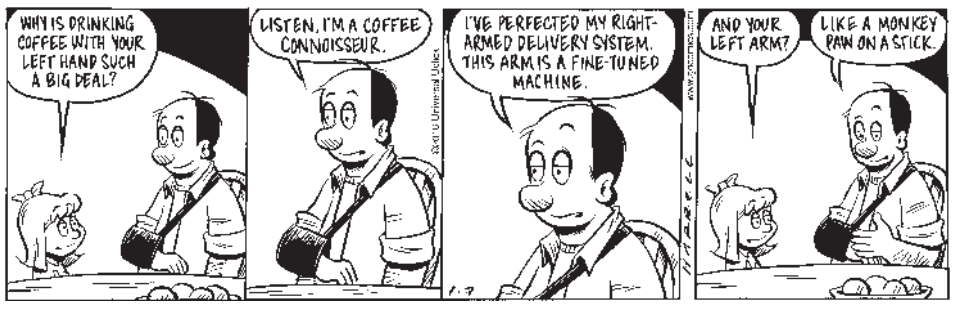
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


WHY IS DRINKING COFFEE WITH YOUR LEFT HAND SUCH A BIG DEAL?
LISTEN, I'M A COFFEE CONNOISSEUR.
I'VE PERFECTED MY RIGHT-ARMED DELIVERY SYSTEM. THIS ARM IS A FINE-TUNED MACHINE.
AND YOUR LEFT ARM?
LIKE A MONKEY PAW ON A STICK.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

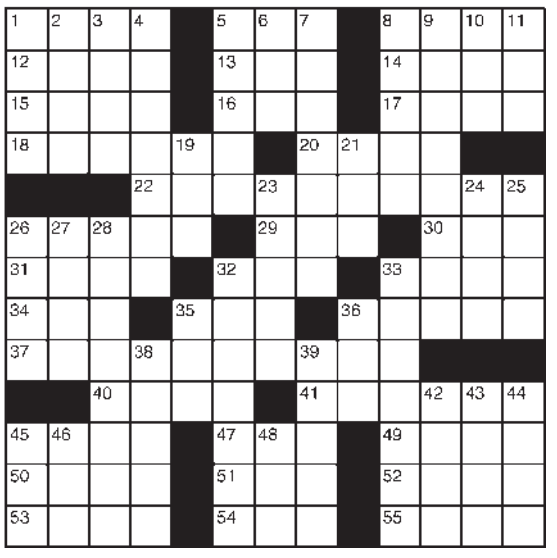
1 Drain bane
5 Boxing arbiter
8 Gent
12 Sitarist Shankar
13 Brit. record label
14 Italy's capital
15 Decorative jug
16 Curly-tailed dog
17 Collar type
18 Infuriate
20 Harsh cleaners
22 Baseless warning
26 Dawdles
29 "Platoon" setting, briefly
30 Broadway's Hagen
31 Diarist Frank
32 Bumbler
33 Scored 100 on
34 William, to Diana
35 Slugger's stat
36 Having a lot to lose?
37 One's real self
40 Jai —
41 Tristan's love
45 Big bash
47 Arch city (Abbr.)
49 Lion's den
50 Roll of fabric
51 Golf peg
52 "Veni, vidi, —"
53 Hebrides isle
54 In a funk
55 Paradise

DOWN

1 Manitoba tribe
2 Grassy area
3 Done with
4 Tall leaf-eater
5 Drive away
6 Outback critter
7 Cover for Adam
8 Angler's basket
9 Tabasco, for one
10 Ovid's "I love"
11 Stock holder
19 Argon, e.g.
21 Candied veggie
23 Slowpoke
24 Ways to go (Abbr.)
25 Created
26 Endure
27 — about (circa)
28 Each year
32 Woodwind players
33 Clear, as of sins
35 Sony rival
36 Hosp. areas
38 Gladden
39 Stopped a squeak
42 — up (sick)
43 Boggle cubes
44 Ireland
45 "Pygmalion" inits.
46 Hunky-dory
48 Samovar brew

Solution time: 24 mins.

Yesterday's answer 1-7



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Jeremy Renner, 45; Nicolas Cage, 52; Katie Couric, 59; David Caruso, 60.

Happy Birthday: Make a difference by getting involved in a cause that will benefit the environment. Your ability to convince others to follow your lead and take part in whatever you organize will give your reputation a boost. Using your past experience as your guide and sticking to a budget will bring the results you are looking for. Your numbers are 8, 11, 22, 24, 34, 38, 43.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Let go of the past. Don't dwell on what others are doing. Put greater importance on yourself and what you want to accomplish, and doors will open and gains will be made. Love is in the stars. ✪✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Put an end to any problems you have with peers or relatives. Speak up, but don't argue or force your opinion on others. Clearing the air so that you can move forward is what counts, not what others think. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Sharing your feelings can be painful, especially if you or someone else is likely to get hurt. Try to keep your life simple and your conversations real. Overreacting will lead to greater problems and an uncertain future. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): If you want something, find a way to make it happen. Be creative and use your imagination to turn a thought into a reality. A partnership will undergo some uncertainty or unexpected changes, but in the end, you'll come out a winner. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Make plans with friends or your lover, or plan a day of rest, relaxation and pampering. Don't let the little things get to you when you should be focusing on your personal and professional dreams. Romance is encouraged. ✪✪✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): You'll face problems at home if you get involved in emotional conversations. Turn the focus to changes you can make to your work space or living quarters. Avoid distractions. You'll feel better if you are busy. ✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Make personal changes that will boost your happiness. Booking a pleasure trip or getting together with someone you find inspiring will give you the incentive to stop procrastinating and start doing. Love is on the rise. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): You can lend a helping hand, but don't offer to pay for someone else's mistakes or let anyone take advantage of your kindness. Your effort should be spent making alterations that are conducive to launching a new project or pursuit. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Surprise everyone instead of waiting to see who is going to oppose your decision. Don't share what you are doing until after the fact. Personal changes will not please everyone, but it's more important to please yourself. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Generosity will be your downfall. Don't fall victim to a scam or someone's hard-luck story. You'll be disappointed if you make an impulsive move. Put your money and your skills to good use by doing something that will benefit others. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): A change in direction or vocation will turn out well. Set up interviews or send out your resume. Taking on a challenge that will help you expand your qualifications is encouraged. Update your appearance and skills, and you'll boost your confidence as well. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Deal with past problems before moving forward. Make amends or rethink what's happened in the past and learn from the mistakes you've made. Secrets are likely to be revealed. Problems with institutions and government agencies are likely. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are insightful, impulsive and helpful. You are forward-thinking and entertaining.

*Eugenia's website—**eugenialast.com**, Eugenia's android app @ **http://bit.ly/exhoro** and join Eugenia on **twitter/facebook/linkedin**.*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

2				3	6			9
3	8		7			5		
8	3			4				
		5		6		7		
				7			9	1
		4			7		5	8
6			5	1				3

Difficulty Level ★★★ 1/07

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

2	3	1	8	5	4	6	7	9
7	4	8	9	2	6	3	1	5
6	5	9	3	1	7	4	8	2
4	2	7	6	9	1	8	5	3
3	9	6	5	7	8	2	4	1
8	1	5	4	3	2	9	6	7
1	6	2	7	4	3	5	9	8
5	7	4	2	8	9	1	3	6
9	8	3	1	6	5	7	2	4

Difficulty Level ★★★ 1/07

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

MAGAZINE TITLES **Solution:** 12 letters

S	T	L	E	V	A	R	T	C	C	A	R	S	O	S
E	S	P	N	R	I	S	E	M	O	R	E	T	W	G
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Williams trey lifts Mavs past Kings in 2OT

DALLAS (AP)— Deron Williams hit a 3-pointer at the buzzer in the second overtime, and the Dallas Mavericks beat Sacramento 117-116 Tuesday night for their 22nd consecutive home victory over the Kings.

Williams took an inbounds pass from Devin Harris with 2.3 seconds left, pump faked to get Rudy Gay to fly by him in the left corner and the ball went in after the buzzer sounded.

Dirk Nowitzki hit an earlier 3 as the Mavericks scored the last eight points after falling behind 116-109 with 1:20 left in the second overtime.

DeMarcus Cousins scored 35 for his third straight 30-point game for the Kings, including a buzzer-beating layup for a 98-all tie at the end of regulation.

Former Dallas guard Rajon Rondo was out with back spasms in his first visit since an acrimonious split after an ill-fated half-season with the Mavericks.

The Kings haven't won a regular-season game in Dallas since Feb. 27, 2003. Sacramento did win a game in Dallas during a five-game playoff series victory over the Mavericks in 2004.

The Kings just missed out on snapping the long Dallas skid a night after winning in Oklahoma City for the first time in 15 tries.

Cousins, who had an odd triple-double with 17 rebounds and 10 turnovers, also had a big blocked shot on Zaza Pachulia in the second extra period. Rudy Gay, who scored 31 points, hit a 3-pointer at the other end for a 116-109 lead with 1:20 left.

But after Williams hit a layup, Nowitzki made a long 3 over Cousins to make it a two-point game. Williams led Dallas with 25 points, while Nowitzki had 23 and Wesley Matthews added 20.

Mavericks coach Rick Carlisle decided to let the Kings run the clock with just a 2-second difference from the game clock.

After former Dallas guard Darren Collison threw up an airball to make the shot clock expire, the Mavericks got a chance to set up the final play for Williams, who started for the first time since straining his left hamstring Dec. 22 against Toronto. He missed four games and came off the bench for two.

Marco Belinelli hit a pair of 3s in the final minute of regulation, the latter pulling the Kings even at 96 with 13 seconds left. After Williams hit a floating layup with 2.1 seconds to go, Cousins took an inbounds pass from Belinelli and hit a driving layup just before the buzzer.

Dallas Mavericks guard Deron Williams (8) shoots a 3-pointer in the final second of the second overtime in an NBA basketball game against the Sacramento Kings on Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2016, in Dallas. The Mavericks won, 117-116.

Rondo avoided any pregame boos by sneaking to the Sacramento bench in his game sweatsuit while the arena was dark during Dallas introductions. Few seemed to notice when he walked to the locker room at halftime after a friendly exchange with a couple of members of Carlisle's staff.

Warriors 109, Lakers 88

In Los Angeles, Klay Thompson scored 22 of his 36 points in the first quarter and Stephen Curry added 17 before sitting out the fourth to rest his ailing leg in the Golden State Warriors' 109-88 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers on Tuesday night.

Kobe Bryant sat out his third straight game with a sore right shoulder for the Lakers, whose three-game winning streak ended in Golden State's 33rd win in 35 games.

Curry stayed in the game after taking a blow on his left leg in the third period, but briefly limped with obvious frustration on his face. The reigning MVP missed two games with a bruised lower left leg last week before returning for Golden State's last two games.

Curry went to the locker room before the fourth.

Draymond Green's streak of three straight triple-doubles ended with nine points, 12 rebounds and five assists, but the Warriors never trailed while beating the Lakers at Staples Center for only the fifth time in franchise history.

Jordan Clarkson scored 23 points for the Lakers. Rookie guard D'Angelo Russell sat out with a sore throat, missing a game for the first time in his career.

The Lakers' three-game winning streak was their longest since February, but the loss dropped their record to 8-28, the second-worst in the NBA.

Thompson had 22 points in the first 11 minutes, hitting four 3-pointers and going 9 for 14 from the field.

Golden State maintained a healthy lead despite not shooting a free throw in the first half, and the Warriors toyed with the Lakers a bit more before scoring 22 consecutive points over 5 1/2 minutes in the third quarter to put it away.

Bryant's shoulder has improved in recent days, but he still decided to sit for the third time in 2016. Lakers coach Byron Scott is cautiously optimistic that the 20-year veteran will return Thursday in Sacramento. Bryant has missed seven games this season.

Green was attempting to become the second player in 27 years to post four straight triple-doubles. He already tied the Warriors record for consecutive triple-doubles, set 56 years ago by Tom Gola.

Golden State is staying in a luxury coastal resort in Southern California before flying north to visit the Trail Blazers on Friday. Coach Luke Walton said it's part of their goal to minimize travel weariness.

Nick Young was booed by Lakers fans in the second quarter after missing two free throws and airballing a jumper in succession. The hometown product has struggled for much of the season.

Bulls 117, Bucks 106

In Chicago, Jimmy Butler had 32 points and a season-high 10 assists to lead Chicago over Milwaukee for its season-best fifth straight win.

Pau Gasol scored 26 points with 11 rebounds, and Taj Gibson added 11 points and 14 boards as the Bulls led the entire way.

Derrick Rose returned to the Bulls after missing three straight games with a sore right hamstring. He showed no effects of the injury and finished with 16 points.

Khris Middleton scored 26 for Milwaukee, and Michael Carter-Williams had 20 points and 12 assists.

Carter-Williams was disappointed with his team's effort to start the game.

"No excuses, but we came off a back-to-back. We came out lazy and at 10-0, we woke up a little bit. But we can't start off 10-0," he said.

Milwaukee got to 90-89 on Giannis Antetokounmpo's basket with a minute left in the third quarter, but the Bulls answered with an 8-0 run. Antetokounmpo finished with 18 points and seven rebounds.

Chicago shot 61 percent in the first half and led 67-61. Gasol scored 13 points and Gibson added nine. Middleton led the Bucks with 18 on 7-of-12 shooting.

"I don't think we're different people than we were three, four weeks ago. I see a progression, I see a development which I like," Gasol said. "Again, can we keep it this way for the entire, for every single game from here on out? We're bringing the energy, we're bringing the focus that is required in this league, then we have a chance because we have plenty of talent, as we all know."

Knicks 107, Hawks 101

In Atlanta, Arron Afflalo and Carmelo Anthony both scored 23 points, and New York almost lost a 16-point lead before holding off Atlanta to give the Knicks their second win over the Hawks in three days.

The Knicks led by 16 in the third quarter but saw the lead reduced to two points in the final minute before Jose Calderon scored on a drive with 18 seconds remaining.

Kristaps Porzingis had 17 points and 11 rebounds for New York. Anthony finished with 11 rebounds and seven assists.

Paul Millsap led Atlanta with 19 points.

The undersized Hawks struggled matching up with the two 7-footers in New York's lineup, Robin Lopez and rookie Kristaps Porzingis.

Porzingis had 17 points and 11 rebounds. Anthony finished with 11 rebounds and seven assists.

"He was doing everything for us, as a leader should do," Porzingis said.

Porzingis made two free throws but Al Horford answered with a 3-pointer to cut the deficit to three. Atlanta's Dennis Schroder made one of two free throws with 40 seconds left.

Calderon's basket pushed the lead to four before Millsap dribbled the ball off his foot and out of bounds.

Afflalo opened the second half with two 3s, giving the Knicks a 60-49 lead and prompting a timeout by Hawks coach Mike Budenholzer.

Shanahan, Lions assistant Austin interviewed for Dolphins job

MIAMI (AP)— Mike Shanahan is contemplating a coaching comeback after two years out of the NFL, and he was interviewed Tuesday for the Miami Dolphins' head job.

The Dolphins also interviewed Detroit Lions defensive coordinator Teryl Austin. The team is casting a wide net in its search and interviewed former Atlanta Falcons coach Mike Smith on Monday.

Shanahan, 63, last coached the Washington Redskins and was fired after going 3-13 in 2013. He went 24-40 in four seasons with the Redskins and took them to the playoffs in 2012.

Shanahan coached from 1995 to 2008 in Denver, where he had only two losing seasons and led the Broncos to Super Bowl titles in 1997 and 1998. He has only one playoff victory since then.

Austin has been with the Lions the past two years and coached defensive tackle Ndamukong Suh, who is now with the Dolphins.

Other outside candidates expected to be interviewed by Miami include Bears offense coordinator Adam Gase, Bills assistant head coach Anthony Lynn and Jaguars assistant coach Doug Marrone. They've asked to interview Patriots offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels, Patriots defense coordinator Matt Patricia and Bengals offensive coordinator Hue Jackson.

The Dolphins will also interview their interim coach, Dan Campbell, who went 5-7 after replacing Joe Philbin. Miami went 6-10 and hasn't made the playoffs since 2008.

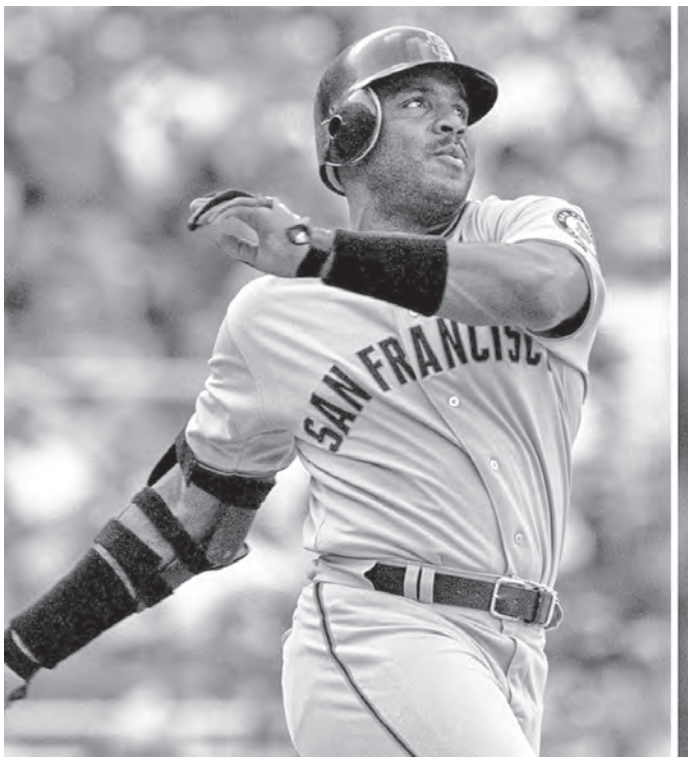
In Philadelphia, Bears offensive coordinator Adam Gase interviewed with the Philadelphia Eagles for their vacant coaching position on Tuesday.

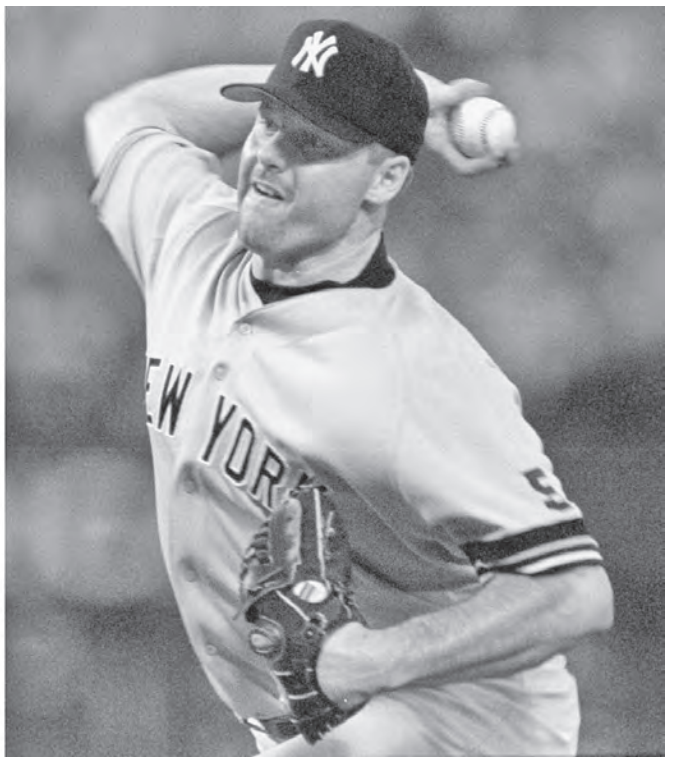
Gase is the third candidate to meet with the Eagles since Chip Kelly was fired last week. Eagles running backs coach Duce Staley and offensive coordinator Pat Shurmur already interviewed.

Gase helped Jay Cutler post a career-high passer rating (92.3) this season after spending the past two seasons as offensive coordinator in Denver. Gase worked with Peyton Manning as Denver's quarterbacks coach for two seasons before running the offense.

The Eagles finished 7-9 after entering the year with Super Bowl expectations. Owner Jeffrey Lurie is expected to meet with several candidates before making a decision.

Bonds, Clemens to get boost from Hall vote changes





AP
Barry Bonds, left, Roger Clemens, right, and other tainted stars of the Steroids Era appear likely to get a boost in Hall of Fame balloting.

NEW YORK (AP)—Barry Bonds, Roger Clemens and other tainted stars of the Steroids Era appear likely to get a boost in Hall of Fame balloting, but not enough to enter Cooperstown this year.

Ken Griffey Jr. seems assured of election on the first try Wednesday, possibly with a record vote of close to 100 percent. Mike Piazza, Jeff Bagwell and Tim Raines also were strong candidates to gain the 75 percent needed for baseball's highest honor.

Following the elimination of about 100 retired baseball writers from the electorate, Bonds and Clemens were on track for a 5-10 percentage point increase. After drawing about 37 percent of the ballots last year, they were in the 48 percent range this year according to www.bbhoftracker.com , which tabulated public votes adding to more than one-third of the total.

Last July, the Hall's board of directors cut eligible voters from approximately 575 to roughly 475 by purging writers who had not been covering the game for more than a decade. Previously, the electorate included people who had been active members of the Baseball Writers' Association of America for 10 consecutive years at any point.

"We have a somewhat different electorate," John Thorn, Major League Baseball's official historian, said Tuesday. "I think possibly the current electorate was not content to keep kicking the PED crowd down into a hole and leaving the Hall of Fame with a crater in its plaque room."

Marc Maturo, a reporter covering New York baseball for Gannett in the 1970s and `80s, was among those who lost voting rights. He said he would have voted for Bonds, Clemens, Griffey and Raines.

"The whole process I think was done too quickly, wasn't given enough thought," he said.

Now a writer for the weekly Rockland County Times, Maturo pointed out players who received one or two votes in recent years, such as Armando Benitez, Aaron Boone, Bret Boone, Darin Erstad, Kenny Rogers, J.T. Snow and B.J. Surhoff.

"They call these courtesy votes or friendship votes," he said, "That should eliminate you. They're not Hall of Famers by anyone's imagination. But people vote for them. To me, that's wrong."

A 13-time All-Star who is sixth with 630 homers, Griffey was a lock to be inducted at Cooperstown on July 24. The former Cincinnati and Seattle star appeared on all 166 ballots counted by bbhoftracker and could challenge the record of 98.84 percent set by Tom Seaver when he was picked by 425 of 430 voters in 1992.

Piazza was at about 87 percent in his fourth appearance after falling short by 28 votes last year, when Randy Johnson, Pedro Martinez, John Smoltz and Craig Biggio became the first quartet elected by the BBWAA in one year since 1955.

Bagwell was third at 80 percent in his sixth appearance, followed by Raines at 78 percent in his ninth. Last year, the actual percentage was about 5 percent under the pre-announcement figure on the vote-tracker.

Bonds, the only seven-time MVP, and Clemens, the only seven-time Cy Young Award winner, are both making their fourth appearance and are eligible for up to six more years.

Napoli to play 1b for Indians after finalizing $7M contract

CLEVELAND (AP)—Mike Napoli switched positions without a hitch. The Indians hope his latest move will be as smooth.

A former catcher who transitioned to first base, Napoli finalized his $7 million, one-year contract with the Indians on Tuesday. The deal was agreed upon last month, but Napoli had to take a physical and some contract language needed to be completed before the slugger's signing became official.

And now that he's with Cleveland, his fourth team, the 34-year-old is excited about a fresh start.

"I still feel like I have a lot in the tank," he said. "I'm able to play every day. I feel like I have a lot to prove."

Napoli can earn an additional $3 million in performance bonuses: $500,000 each for 450, 500, 550, 600, 625 and 645 plate appearances.

Cleveland's lineup needs some right-handed power, and the Indians believe Napoli can provide it -- he has 204 home runs. Napoli also will bring the Indians some versatility: He can play first base, catch, fill in as an outfielder and be used as a designated hitter.

"He's been a very productive hitter, especially against left-handed pitching, and has worked really hard also on the defensive end of things to become a very good defensive first baseman," Indians general manager Chris Antonetti said. "He's a really intelligent baseball player that plays the game the right way, that's a student of the game, and we also feel will fit in really well in our clubhouse. He's a guy that was universally respected each stop along the way in his career and we're really excited to add him to our mix."

Napoli is expected to be the Indians' every day first baseman. Carlos Santana will move to designated hitter.

Napoli hit .224 with 18 home runs and 50 RBI with Boston and Texas last year. After being traded to the Rangers, he batted .295 with five homers and 10 RBI in 35 games.

He struggled throughout the first half last season, batting just .207 in 98 games. But the slow start didn't deter him.

"I really can't put my finger on it to tell you the truth," he said of his early problems in 2015. "I just went through a rough patch that sort of just snowballed on me. But I'm the type of guy that just kept working at it, stayed in the cage, stayed positive, and I got into a routine where I felt good every day with my batting practice, cage work. I just found it. Got off to a rough start. I don't really know why but I stuck with it and found my stroke again."

A new year on the PGA Tour raises 5 questions

KAPALUA, Hawaii (AP)—Jordan Spieth spent the first official practice day of the new year in good company.

As he rolled putts at Kapalua, his teenage sister Ellie sat next to him on the practice green and watched until she reclined on her back and took in the warmth of the Hawaii sun. Few tournaments are more relaxing than the Hyundai Tournament of Champions, and that's just what golf needs.

This is going to be a hectic year.

At stake is a gold medal in Rio and a gold Ryder Cup at Hazeltine.

Another prize is the No. 1 world ranking, and that could take all year to sort out.

Most of the attention, at least for now, is on Spieth. He is coming off a year that was beyond his expectations by winning the Masters and U.S. Open, three other PGA Tour titles and the FedEx Cup. His final tweet of 2015: "Would rather this year not end."

It starts all over on Thursday with the most star power at Kapalua in 10 years. Where will it lead? Here are five topics to ponder for 2016:

THE ENCORE: In the last 25 years, only four players have won majors in consecutive seasons—Tiger Woods, Phil Mickelson, Padraig Harrington and Rory McIlroy. In the last 50 years, only four play

ers have followed a multiple-major season by winning another major -- Woods, Tom Watson, Jack Nicklaus and Lee Trevino.

Good luck, Jordan.

Odds are against the 22-year-old Texan matching what he did last year. Remember, he won two of those tournaments in playoffs and won the second leg of the Grand Slam when Dustin Johnson three-putted from 12 feet. And for all he did last year, Spieth could lose the No. 1 ranking this week.

The competition is strong as ever. More than just McIlroy and Jason Day, the biggest competition for Spieth might be his 2015 season.

THE BIG THREE: For the first time since the world ranking began in 1986, the top three players are all in their 20s. The No. 1 spot changed six times in six weeks last year, and more movement is likely. Spieth, Day and McIlroy are so close that any one of them could be No. 1 before the PGA Tour reaches the Florida swing.

Ten years ago, Vijay Singh, Tiger Woods and Ernie Els were battling for No. 1. That prompted Retief Goosen to say, "There will probably be a No. 1 player a few times this year." Woods took over in June and stayed at the top for the next five years.

So it's possible that one player pulls away from the other two.

Or considering the deepening pool of talent, the "Big Three" could become a lot bigger.

OLYMPICS: Golf returns to the Olympic program for the first time since 1904, and there is sure to be plenty of discussion about whether a gold medal is more valuable than a silver claret jug, much less a green jacket.

In one respect, this might be one of the easier tournaments to win. Because if qualifying ended today, the 60-man field would have only 25 from the top 50 in the world.

Until the players get to Rio, the biggest impact of the Olympics has been on scheduling. The PGA Championship has been moved to late July ahead of the games. That means Spieth and McIlroy could play eight times in 12 weeks—two majors, four FedEx Cup playoff events, the Olympics and the Ryder Cup.

RYDER CUP: The only player who faces a tougher encore than Spieth might be Darren Clarke, captain of a European team going after an unprecedented fourth straight victory. Clarke follows the masterful leadership of Paul McGinley at Gleneagles in 2014.

As for the Americans? They really pulled out all the stops by creating -- wait for it -- a task force. Davis Love III returns as captain, a chance at redemption from when the Americans lost a 10-6 lead at Medinah four years ago.

TIGER WOODS: The biggest star in golf sent a mixed message in The Bahamas last month. He spent more time talking about his past than the future, saying at one point that anything he accomplishes the rest of his career will be "gravy." He also tried to cool speculation about retirement by saying he wants to play.

Three back surgeries in just over 18 months kept him from doing little more than walking.

Woods missed eight months recovering from reconstructive knee surgery after the 2008 U.S. Open. He missed four months after the scandal in his personal life led to divorce after 2009. He missed three months because of injuries in 2011 and 2014. He already has been out of competition for five months.

Interest might be higher than ever when he returns. If he returns.

Family, friends remember legacy of David 'Maria'

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
David Taitano Aldan, right, is pictured here with his wife Maria Nakatsukasa Aldan.

David T. Aldan did not have a long list of accomplishments and records or medals to prove his mettle as a sportsman since he was just an average player who loved competing.

However, Aldan, known as David Maria because of his wife, the late Maria Nakatsuka, was considered to be among the first multi-sport athletes in the Commonwealth as he was also into basketball and soccer.

He won a few trophies in both team sports and they are already gathering dust in his former home in Afetnas in San Antonio.

Aldan, whose 20th death anniversary is being remembered today, was one of the first athletes that donned the CNMI colors as a swimmer in the inaugural Micronesian Games hosted by Saipan in 1969.

Aside from swimming, basketball, and soccer, Aldan was also into tennis and volleyball. He really loved the water with spear fishing being a favorite past time.

He spent years as a teacher at Marianas High School and later became among the pioneers at the former Fishing Authority, now the Division of Fish and Wildlife, that helped build the Smiling Cove Marina and the Sugar Dock.

But more than being an athlete, Aldan's legacy could be seen in some of the projects he helped complete and the care he showed for the CNMI's wildlife and their natural habitat. His contribution to the community could not be summed up in one story.

Aldan, who was born from a humble family in Alamagan and grew up in Pagan, was part of a CNMI delegation that negotiated with Palau in transferring 100 clams to replenish the depleting number in the Commonwealth and helped design the Smiling Cove Marina that was completed through a federal grant.

Gus Aldan said that his older brother grew up fishing, swimming, and riding the canoe. "That's why he loves the water. He goes spearfishing during the time when there's no proper scuba gear."

Eleanor Cepeda, one of Aldan's daughters, said her father really loved the ocean to the extent that his wish was to be buried at sea. "The ocean was a huge part of his life. But our mother did not want to do that."

Aldan never finished college but could identify various species of birds and fishes and helped visiting marine biologists update their records.

"Our dad was also a taxidermist and preserved the birds in order for him to show it to the kids when he visited elementary schools. He always reminded kids to take care of the environment and the animals that live in it," said Dee Cepeda, Eleanor's twin sister.

Stanley Taisacan, who used to work with Aldan, said that it was always fun working with him at the Division of Fish and Wildlife.

"He was a resourceful person and among the first employees of Fish and Wildlife when it was still known as Fishing Authority. He pioneered most of the programs there and helped translate the names of the fishes to Chamorro and Carolinian."

NMISF holds first sanctioned meet Saturday

The first Northern Mariana Islands Swimming Federation-sanctioned meet will be held this Saturday at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool.

Tsunami Saipan will be the host of the tournament and times will be considered for both CNMI national and age group records. Registration fee is $5 per individual event and $7 per relay.

There will be 10 individual events and two relays. Swimmers from the host group and Saipan Swim Club will compete in the 1,500m, 200, 100m and 50m freestyle, 50m butterfly, 50m and 100m backstroke, 50m and 100 breaststroke, and 200m individual medley, and in the 4x100m freestyle relay, and 4x50m medley relay.

Warm-up swims are allowed from 8am to 9am, while races will take place from 9am to 12nn. Meet officials and volunteer timers are requested to be at the Marpi pool for the briefing 30 minutes before the kick-off time.

"All officials are requested to wear white with no swim team logos. Officials should also report on deck 30 minutes before start of the meet for the briefing," NMISF said in an email circulated to both clubs.

NMISF regulations and FINA technical and U.S Swimming Age Group Meet rules will be implemented in the meet.

This weekend's tournament has Carol Lynn Calobong-Pierce and Val Welch as referees, while Yuki Rechucher will be the announcer. Clerk of course are Hiroko Tenorio and Yoriko Sugie , while other officials include starter Bobby Winkfield and John Hirsh, judges of stroke/inspector of turns Yulia Aleksenko and Sanjay Dangol from Tsunami Saipan and SSC's Tami Winkfield and Nami Kadokura, marshalls Noriko Watanabe and Mabel Mago, and head timer Alfreda Camacho. ***(Roselyn B. Monroyo)***

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Swimmers plunge into the pool during last month's Saipan Swim Club-hosted tournament. The island's swimmers will return to action at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool this Saturday for the Northern Mariana Islands Swimming Federation-sanctioned meet.

GMJ/IKKI

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nailed back-to-back layups for a 42-36 advantage.

However, PIC went cold after that and scored only 4 points in the closing minute of the third canto, allowing GMJ/IKKI to regain the upper hand, 48-46.

PIC failed to keep the momentum it got early in the third, as it leaned heavily on Barbo and Aranda and Mike Espinosa and Jake Quitugua struggled, while James Abuy spent a lot of minutes on the bench. Quitugua ended up scoreless in the match , as he watched PIC kiss its finals bid goodbye from the sidelines in the majority of fourth quarter. PIC tried to use other players to back up Barbo and Aranda, but to no avail.

On the other hand, the backcourt trio of Elgene Mangali, James Villacrusis, and J.R. Barrios worked well with big man Dizon and Juan Camacho. The guards took charge of scoring for GMJ/IKKI, while the frontliners stood their ground against Barbo and company.

Barrios and Mangali teamed up in GMJ/IKKI's 5-0 swing late in the fourth after a controversial 8-second backcourt violation charged against their team to post their biggest lead in the game, 68-57.

The disputed call started with GMJ/IKKI holding a 63-57 advantage and Dizon getting ready for the inbound play at the 4:00 mark of the fourth canto. Dizon then passed the ball to Mangali, who was hounded by PIC defenders and eventually charged with the infraction by referee Toto Banatasa. However, GMJ/IKKI protested the call, as the game clock read at 3:54. The match was temporarily halted with the confusion in the game clock and Banatasa's call. League official Boy Garcia ruled in favor of GMJ/IKKI based on the game clock, but the two other referees (Fyke Sabino and Robert Tamondong) stuck with Banatasa's earlier decision and handed possesion to PIC.

At the resumption of the match, PIC turned the ball over, leading to an and-1 fastbreak play from Barrios off a feed from Mangali. Barrios then returned the favor to Mangali in the ensuing play to give GMJ/IKKI a double-digit advantage.

PIC tried a late rally behind the triples of Barbo, Aranda, and Abuy, but ran out of time, while Mangali and Villacrusis hit crucial free throws to keep GMJ/IKKI's safe distance. PIC scored all its last 15 points from downtown, 9 of them came from Abuy, who could have provided his team with the needed baskets earlier when GMJ/IKKI was beginning to gain control of the match.

GMJ/IKKI 79 – Villacrusis 21, Mangali 13, Camacho 7, Barrios 7, Estevez 7, Borja 6, Ferrer 6, Litulumar 6, Dizon 3, Sison 2.

PIC 76 – Aranda 27, Barbo 20, Abuy 11, Rabasto 8, Castro 4, Espinosa 3, Galloway 2, Hambros 1.

Scoring by quarters: 21-17, 36-32, 48-46, 79-76.

AUSSIE

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done," said Heaps, who went back to their head office in New South Wales Thursday morning to report the proceedings.

Polytan, according to its website, also has offices in other countries in Asia and New Zealand, giving the company the opportunity to land similar projects in the region. The firm made the track surfaces at Hong Kong Sports Institute, New Zealand professional rugby team Chiefs' training facility in Ruakura and several stadiums in Australia, like the Barlow Park in Cairns and Griffith University in Queensland.

"We also did the track in Pohnpei, Papua New Guinea and Fiji. So, we are used to working on islands and with this type of climate," said Heaps.

"We are here to give the best quality service. A track facility that will last and enjoyed by the community," he added.

Tropex Garden's previous projects involved laying out the grass surface at the Oleai football field and the greens and fairways of the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort.

"Our boss [Lito Mendoza] decided to submit a bid for this project since it will be a challenge for us. We're just going to try our luck but if we get the project it would be good for our company," said Basillo.

NMHC and the Northern Marianas Sports Association, the private sports group tasked to maintain the decade-old facility, want to make sure that the resurfacing work—from the moment the old rubber surface is removed and up to laying out the adhesive and the new track—is done properly in order to regain its Level II certification from the International Association of Athletics Federations.

The Oleai Sports Complex Stadium, the only eight-lane Level II certified facility by the IAAF, was constructed in early 2000 and opened in 2002. It previously hosted the 2006 Micronesian Games, the 2008 Oceania Athletics Championship and many local tournaments.

ZARINAE

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dash. She posted 13.62 seconds, which is about three seconds behind gold medal winner Candace Hill of the Unites States (11.08 seconds). Trinidad and Tobago's Khalifa St. Fort settled for the silver with a time of 11.19, while American Jayla Kirkland was third at 11.41.

In local competitions, Sapong went home with four silver medals in last year's 12th Public School System-McDonald's All Schools Athletics Championship held at Hopwood Junior High School Field.

She placed second to Marianas High School teammate Pena in the 60m (8.27), 200m (30.31) and 400m (1:15:27) runs, and in long jump with a leap of 3.95m against the latter's 4.15m.

Meanwhile, the 16th World Indoor Championships will be without powerhouse Russia, which was suspended by the IAAF in November last year following a widespread investigation on doping practices among its athletes. The suspension excludes Russia from hosting and competing in IAAF-sanctioned events and could be lifted by the end of March at the earliest.

2015 Christmas Youth Futsal Tournament U12 Finals

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Betde's Kohtaro Goto, right, dribbles away from the defense of Tekkers' Kaden Church during their title game in the co-ed U12 division of the 2015 Christmas Youth Futsal Tournament last Sunday at the TSL Sports Complex.

Tekkers' Kaden Church, left, dribbles in front of Betde's Kohtaro Goto.

Tekkers' Rinto Takahashi, left, gives Kaden Church a high-give after the latter scored the fourth goal for the team.

Tekkers' Blake Mister tries to keep possession as Betde's Kohtaro Goto stays close on defense.

Betde's Oliver Fajardo, right, picks up the ball, preventing Rintaro Miyawaki from scoring.

Betde coach Ryan Relucio gives instructions to his players during a timeout.

Tekkers' Rintaro Miyawaki, left, has his eyes on the ball, while Betde's Kohtaro Goto gets ready on defense.

Betde's Anthony Bergancia receives a pass from a teammate and is defended by Tekkers' Jon Villagomez.

Tekkers coaches Chris Aninzo, left, and Sunjoon Tenorio, second left, celebrate with their players after beating Betde in the finals, 4-1.

Williams trey lifts Mavs past Kings in 2OT

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Sports

Bonds, Clemens to get boost from Hall vote changes

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Aussie firm, 9 others eye Oleai project

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

An Australian firm and nine other local contractors showed interest in submitting a bid for the resurfacing project of the Oleai Sports Complex's track oval based on the mandatory pre-bid conference held yesterday at the Northern Marianas Housing Corp. office in Garapan.

The pre-bid conference was done to know how many are interested in submitting a bid for the project, while deadline for bid submission is set for Jan. 22. All the required documents must be turned over at the Procurement & Supply office in Lower Base no later than 4:30pm.

JON PEREZ
Northern Marianas Sports Association vice president Dr. Kurt Barnes, center, shows to representatives of interested contractors the black patches and bubbles at the Oleai Sports Complex track facility.

NMHC planner and environmental officer Jacob Muna announced in the meeting that they are also changing the performance time from 150 calendar days to 150 working days.

Australia-based Polytan, Tropex Garden, and Hongye Construction are three of the 10 contractors that will be vying to land the project funded by a Community Development Block Grant from NMHC.

Polytan sales and project development official Steve Heaps represented his firm, Ernie Basillo attended for Tropex, while Hongye had Jerry Bernabe.

Heaps, who came to Saipan just to attend the meeting, said that their company would submit a good offer in the hopes of gettting the project.

"We specialize in doing this type of projects. We have been one of the leaders in track systems in the Asia Pacific and have the knowledge, skills, and personnel in getting this

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GMJ/IKKI ousts PIC, enters division finals

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
GMJ/IKKI Wholesale's Juan Camacho, center, beats Devin Galloway, right, in a battle for the loose ball, during the third quarter of their semis game in the west division of the San Antonio caging last week at the San Antonio court.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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GMJ/IKKI Wholesale eliminated Pacific Islands Club, 79-76, to barge into the west division finals of the 2015 San Antonio Community Action Network Basketball League.

GMJ/IKKI played better team basketball at the resumption of their rain-suspended semis match at the San Antonio court last week to notch the second finals berth and arrange and winner-take-all championship showdown against Blue Haus.

The GMJ/IKKI-PIC tiff, which was first played last Dec. 15, resumed last Dec. 29 at the 8:39 mark of the third period with the match in a standoff, 36-36, and the former's Allison Dizon attempting for two free throws. He muffed both charities and GMJ/IKKI went on to miss all its shots in the next three minutes of play, while Darwin Barbo gave PIC its first basket and Jack Aranda

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Zarinae trains for World Indoors

By JON PEREZ
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Zarinae Sapong has been busy with early morning workouts as she prepares for the 16th International Association of Athletics Federation World Indoor Championships set from March 17 to 20 at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland.

Northern Marianas Athletics national coach Elias Rangamar trains Sapong every 5:30am and is alternating her workout on the track and inside the weight room

Sapong, who will race in the 60m event in Portland, has been a veteran international campaigner and represented the CNMI in the 2014 Micronesian Games in Pohnpei where she won a silver medal as part of the women's 4x100m relay team that also had Rachel Abrams, Friendly Joy Pena, and Lia'mwar Rangamar as members.

IAAF WEBSITE
Zarinae Sapong, left, gets ready at the starting line of the women's 100m run in last year's 9th International Association of Athletics Federations World Youth Championships at the Estadio Pascual Guerrero in Cali, Colombia.

She also competed in the 100m and 200m runs in the 2015 Oceania Area Championships at the Barlow Park multisport facility in Cairns, Australia.

After her competition in Australia, Sapong traveled alone to Cali, Colombia for the 9th IAAF World Youth Championships where she set a personal best record in the girls' 100m

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